

Reconciling Regeneration and Coastal Adaptation

A report commissioned as part of the
East of England Coastal Initiative

March 2011



SQW

Executive Summary

Purpose and context

1. In spring 2010, SQW and Land Use Consultants were commissioned by Essex County Council – on behalf of the wider East of England Coastal Initiative – to examine the relationship between regeneration and coastal adaptation. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to *inform future approaches to some of the most complex issues facing policy-makers in the East of England: how to reconcile the different imperatives relating to regeneration in coastal areas with the need for coastal adaptation*. Within this context:
 - *regeneration* was defined in terms of reversing economic, social and physical decline but also wider “process” considerations concerned with “renewal from within” and embracing issues relating to culture, leisure and environment (as set out by the Coastal Communities Alliance)
 - *coastal change* was recognised as physical change to the shoreline (which in the East of England relates mainly to coastal erosion and coastal flooding)
 - *coastal adaptation* was understood as the process through which individuals and communities adjust to changing conditions in the coastal environment.
2. Within some parts of the East of England, the challenges linked to coastal regeneration and adaptation are acute and immediate. Some of the region’s coastal settlements are amongst its most deprived and there is a pressing need to reverse the cumulative effects of decades of disadvantage. However there is also increasing recognition of the importance and fragility of coastal environments. Linked to this are competing issues relating to conservation, energy and resource needs, and the dilemmas surrounding the management of coastal erosion and flood risk, and all of this in the context of climate change.

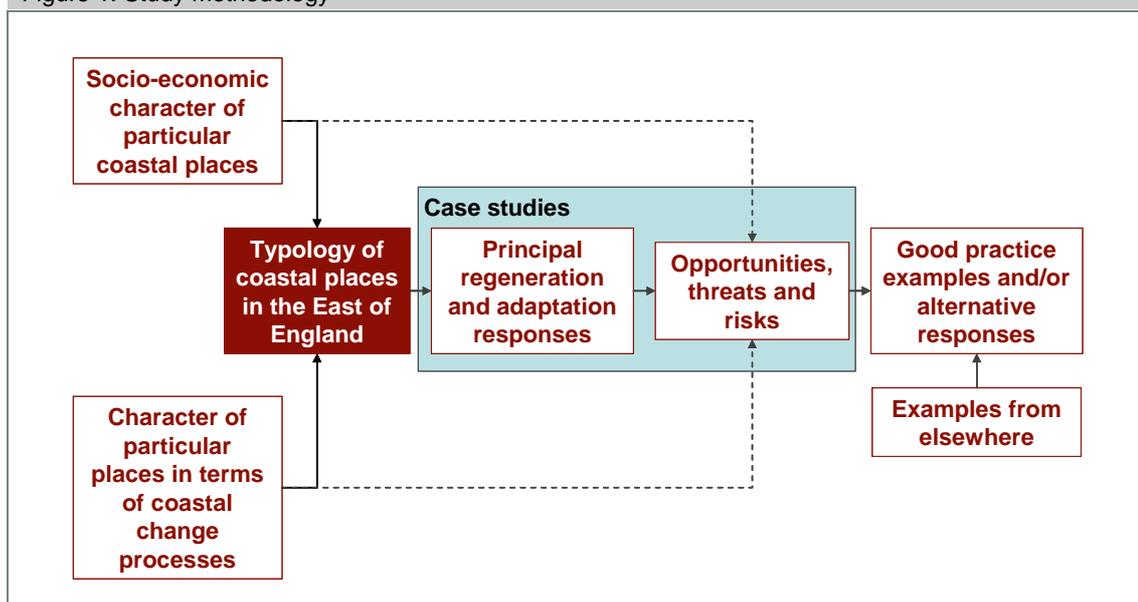
Approach

3. In seeking to respond to the study’s purposes, five phases of work were completed, as illustrated in Figure 1:
 - first, for around thirty coastal settlements in the East of England, we built up a profile – through a desk-based assessment – of both socio-economic circumstances and the current and prospective situation in relation to coastal change
 - second, on the basis of this analysis, we derived a typology of coastal places; this was structured in response to considerations relating to *both* socio-economic character and processes of coastal change
 - third, for two groups of geographically proximate places drawn from different parts of the typology, we examined in detail current approaches to regeneration and coastal adaptation, and the relationships between the two: our two clusters of case studies

were Clacton-on-Sea – Jaywick – Brightlingsea – West Mersea in Essex and Winterton-on-Sea – Hemsby – Caister – Great Yarmouth in Norfolk

- fourth, we examined the approaches adopted by coastal communities elsewhere in the UK and internationally in seeking to effect regeneration and/or adaptation; examples were drawn from Lincolnshire, the West of Scotland, the Baltic Coast and the Australian state of Victoria
- fifth, reflecting both on the East of England case studies and the review of approaches adopted elsewhere, we sought to draw out some practical implications/messages aimed at both national and local policy-makers and also coastal communities.

Figure 1: Study methodology



Source: SQW

Key findings

4. Coastal adaptation and regeneration are dynamic processes. Depending on local circumstances, win-win outcomes (benefiting both the environment and local communities) *may* be possible, but imperatives can also be intrinsically and irreconcilably mis-aligned; where this is the case, there may be no *in situ* solution and instead, mechanisms like roll-back and/or policy decisions to preclude new development need to be brought to bear. Overall, with rising sea levels and diminishing public finances, the challenges linked to *reconciling* regeneration and coastal adaptation within coastal communities are growing.
5. That said, from our work in the East of England and our consideration of practice elsewhere, we observed, not surprisingly, that the scope for *reconciliation* does vary spatially:
 - genuine *reconciliation* is easier to achieve in situations in which settlements have a reasonably robust local economy (i.e. with a clear and viable economic role and purpose) *and* levels of tension with processes of coastal change are modest: in these circumstances, through active and sustained community engagement and clear local leadership, effective and sustainable solutions can be (and are being) devised

- conversely – and despite significant efforts at a local level – existing mechanisms at the interface between coastal adaptation and regeneration are struggling to effect solutions where the issues on both fronts are acute and urgent.

Working towards solutions

6. Particularly where the tensions are acute, we found no evidence of easy solutions: there simply are no “silver bullets”. However we did observe that in many different places, coastal communities are “feeling their way” towards some kind of way(s) forward. In the process, important lessons are being learned¹. From our study, we make the following observations.

External “solutions” may look like “quick fixes”, but creating the scope for genuine local ownership/influence is important in relation to them...

7. Our work suggested that external imperatives *and* “imposed solutions” may jar badly with the aspirations of local communities:
 - perversely, perhaps, the imperative to protect designated landscapes may represent a growing threat to some coastal communities in the context of coastal change: issues relating to the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads (against a backdrop of rising sea levels) were raised particularly in this context
 - the characteristics of the natural coastline of the East of England, together with the pressures exerted by coastal processes, means that some of its environmental assets (such as beaches and wetlands) are under threat, and could be further compromised by the need to defend coastal communities from sea level rise and extreme weather events
 - equally, for some coastal communities in the East of England and elsewhere, investment in offshore waters (e.g. wind farms) may be a catalyst for economic renewal; but whilst the scope for economic regeneration is clear, local communities may still have concerns in relation to it.
8. The implication is that coastal communities and environments need to be understood holistically, not in simplistic or one-dimensional terms. Through the study, we observed that in some circumstances, steps are being taken to give local communities some level of ownership/influence in relation to imposed “solutions”. Although early days, this process appears to be bearing fruit.

Implications: Integrated solutions are needed in coastal settings, taking full account of environmental, social and economic issues. Building a strong level of engagement and ownership within coastal communities is important even where external “solutions” – whether economic or environmental – emerge

¹ Many of these are being examined in considerably more detail through the £11m Defra Coastal Change Pathfinder programme (which as at March 2011 is drawing to a close). The programme’s findings will be important in relation to the issues considered through this study

There is a need for regeneration models based on “renewal from within”...

9. Over recent years, the dominant regeneration model in many of the region’s coastal settlements, particularly the larger ones, has been housing-led: house-building – often with some up-front infrastructural investment funded by the public sector – has been the key to securing new investment. Particularly where demand is limited, this model appears increasingly fractured. Indeed, a number of the delivery vehicles set up to advance housing growth are now being wound down.
10. However there does not, as yet, appear to be a well formulated alternative. In our view, stimulating local private sector business growth – and encouraging local people to help grow those businesses – must be a central part of the solution: all settlements need an economic purpose and many coastal settlements need to function better as local economies. In addition, the potential for embracing the natural environment in solutions, for example by creating new coastal habitats that can help to absorb and adapt to change, also needs to be seen as part of the mix. This may offer opportunities to create new assets to improve quality of life and attract economic activity, becoming part of the character and fabric of local communities.

Implications: Coastal communities must be clear on their own economic role and purpose and environmental assets and processes can play into this. It is important that local businesses have the confidence to invest. This has implications at a variety of spatial scales. For emerging Local Enterprise Partnerships, there is a need to encourage locally stimulated responses: could there, perhaps, be one or more coastal Enterprise Zones? More locally, is there scope for initiatives akin to the “Totnes Pound” which would allow more of the benefits of local economic activity to be retained locally? And can adaptation be the catalyst for more environmentally-led economic activity through the creation of new environmental assets?

Working with and through the planning system is very important...

11. In terms of *reconciling* regeneration and coastal adaptation, the planning system is really important – if complicated and imperfect. It is also changing. Various tools of relevance to processes of reconciling regeneration and adaptation in coastal areas are being introduced (e.g. the Supplement to PPS25 (Development and Coastal Change), published in March 2010) is important, as is the development of neighbourhood planning signalled by the Localism Bill (December 2010)). Although early days, in principle – and if appropriately resourced – these could be useful and effective, particularly where the scale of the challenge is relatively modest.
12. Various funding/financing models are also emerging and in principle, these ought to be able to help operationalise mechanisms like roll-back. For example, in appropriate circumstances, there is, potentially, the scope for sale and lease-back arrangements for the owners of coastal property. Equally, it may be that planning gain can be harnessed for adaptation purposes, if appropriate development is feasible (although in some instances, it will not be).
13. Throughout, the underlying objectives linked to spatial planning need to be clear and in this context, political leadership is crucial. For example, in some situations, prioritising the “safety of people” – rather than economic growth or housing development – has led to

solutions that are radical (if difficult) and not cheap, but they are broadly consistent with the need to *reconcile* regeneration and coastal adaptation.

14. In addition, it is important to be cognisant of the revolution that is underway with regard to marine planning. Although much of the detail remains to be developed, this should result in a more managed interface between the marine and terrestrial environments and in seeking to reconcile coastal regeneration and adaptation, it ought to provide more opportunities for holistic solutions (although it is unlikely to result in simplification).

Implications: Planning processes are complex, but there are some potentially helpful tools within the planning system. Putting these to work effectively in coastal communities requires a high level of community engagement and commitment. It also needs creative and sustained responses from local planning authorities, and strong political leadership.

Coastal communities have a critical role in shaping their future...

15. Coastal communities need to recognise that change is not an option: sooner or later, it is inevitable. In the East of England, many coastal communities have a high incidence of older people, a good proportion of whom have moved to the coast on retirement. While it is important to avoid stereotypes and caricatures, the fact remains that in many cases, the prospect of change is unwelcome locally. Equally, in some coastal communities, there is acute deprivation and income levels are very low; in some circumstances, a level of financial viability has been achieved because living costs are also low (primarily because the housing stock is poor) but all of this severely limits options in formulating responses to coastal change and effecting regeneration.
16. Whatever the situation, coastal communities need to be encouraged to engage positively so as to shape the debate about how change will happen. There is evidence – from the East of England and elsewhere – of communities shying away even from discussing the issues relating to coastal change because of a deep-seated fear of fuelling “coastal blight”. Sometimes this results from a lack of understanding and in general, there is a need to continue to make efforts to explain, for example, exactly what information within (in particular) the relevant Shoreline Management Plan really means. Specifically in the SMP context, a clearer separation between “understanding coastal processes” and “formulating solutions” might be helpful with regard to community engagement.
17. Whatever the circumstances, informed and sustained community engagement is essential if appropriate, and locally acceptable, choices are to be made. And there are examples of communities making fundamentally difficult but successful decisions. Where this is happening, the common strand appears to be informed engagement over a period of time with the community itself coming to some kind of view on the best way of managing risks and subsequently defining a new vision. All of this needs to be properly resourced. There are examples of funding (e.g. through the EU LEADER Community Initiative) being drawn down to help sustain processes of this nature.

Implications: There is no blueprint for coastal communities in seeking to effect regeneration whilst adapting to coastal change. Solutions must be negotiated and

developed locally, based on informed judgements in relation to risk. In this context, processes of community engagement must be sustained: the communities themselves are critical in terms of effecting some level of reconciliation, but sustained and informed engagement needs resourcing.

1: Introduction

Purpose of the study

- 1.1 In spring 2010, SQW and Land Use Consultants were commissioned by Essex County Council – on behalf of the wider East of England Coastal Initiative – to examine the relationship between regeneration and coastal adaptation within the region. More specifically, the purpose of the study was to inform future approaches to some of the most complex issues facing policy-makers in the East of England: *how to reconcile the different imperatives relating to regeneration in coastal areas, the protection of high quality environments and the need for coastal adaptation.*
- 1.2 Within the East of England, these challenges are both acute and immediate. Some of the region's coastal settlements – for example, Jaywick, Southend-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft – are amongst its most deprived: there is a pressing need to reverse the cumulative effects of decades of disadvantage. However there is also increasing recognition of the importance – but also the fragility – of coastal environments and, linked to this, the competing issues relating to conservation, energy and resource needs, and the dilemmas surrounding the management of coastal erosion and flood risk, and all of this in the context of climate change. Coastal processes across parts of the region's coast are very active; there has, for example, been substantial and rapid erosion in the area of north east Norfolk from Cromer to Happisburgh. As sea levels rise – and in the context of a low-lying topography – the issues and dilemmas relating to coastal defences are rising rapidly up the political agenda.
- 1.3 Prompted in part by important recent policy statements – notably *Planning Policy Statement 25 Supplement: Development and Coastal Change* (published by CLG in March 2010) and *Adapting to Coastal Change: Developing a Policy Framework* (published by Defra in March 2010) but also the provisions of the *Localism Bill* (presented to parliament in December 2010) – there is a need to explore the scope for creative new approaches to sustainable development in coastal areas. These must be capable of reconciling the dual underlying imperatives of regeneration and coastal adaptation².
- 1.4 Through an analysis of existing approaches to regeneration, and their relationship to processes of coastal change, this study has therefore sought to consider the extent to which these two key imperatives are currently aligned and the scope for alternative solutions.

Scope of the study and questions of definition

- 1.5 Implicit within this statement of the study's purpose are a number of key definitions which were discussed and agreed with our steering group at the outset and have been instrumental in

² In parallel, Defra has supported 15 coastal local authorities as Coastal Change Pathfinders. These are charged with exploring practical approaches to coastal adaptation. Coastal Change Pathfinders have been established in four areas of the East of England: North Norfolk (with Defra funding of £3m); Waveney (£1.5m); Great Yarmouth (£300k); and Tendring (£1m). The Pathfinder programme is due to run until Spring 2011. A brief synopsis of the four East of England projects is provided in Annex C

shaping the study. These relate, in particular, to the definitions of **regeneration** and **coastal change / coastal adaptation**, and the relationships between them.

Regeneration

1.6 The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) defines regeneration as “*a set of activities that reverse economic, social and physical decline in areas where market forces will not do this without support from government*”³. CLG argues further that regeneration is about time-limited investment and that it should result in one or more of the following outcomes:

- improving economic performance and tackling worklessness, particularly in the most deprived areas
- creating the right conditions for business growth which could include investment in infrastructure, land use, and a better public realm
- creating sustainable places where people want to live and can work and businesses want to invest.

1.7 This definition, however, is not uncontested in a coastal context. The Coastal Communities Alliance’s *Coastal Regeneration Handbook* provides something of a critique. It argues that CLG’s definition of regeneration is preoccupied with issues relating to jobs. This – it argues – is problematic in a coastal setting because the principal mechanisms for creating jobs run counter to key aspects of the intrinsic character of coastal communities; specifically, John Walton comments that

*many of the attractive qualities of coastal environments are essentially non-commercial, based on the expectation of free access to beaches and coastlines, and the privatisation and commercialisation of space that is often associated with the preferred model of private/public partnerships is likely to encounter resistance from both residents and consumers*⁴.

1.8 As an alternative formulation, the Coastal Communities Alliance adopts an approach to regeneration that is process-driven; it asserts, simply, that it sees regeneration as “*involving and affecting all ages and having cultural, leisure and environmental dimensions*”⁵. No outcomes are specified, although reference is made to “*community-oriented regeneration goals*” and “*renewal from within*”.

Coastal change and adaptation

1.9 In definitional terms, **coastal change** is more straightforward. It is defined by Defra simply as “*physical change to the shoreline, i.e. erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and coastal accretion*”. Each of these components of coastal change is a geomorphological process:

³ Source: CLG Transforming Places; Changing lives: a framework for regeneration - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/citiesandregions/pdf/896104.pdf> page: 6

⁴ Source: Communities Alliance Coastal Regeneration Handbook, Page: 10

⁵ Source: Communities Alliance Coastal Regeneration Handbook, Page: 10

- *Coastal erosion*: a natural process that occurs as a result of waves, tides or currents striking the shore. Sediment or rocks are washed away (but can be a sediment source for elsewhere), and the coastline changes shape as a result
- *Coastal landslide*: downhill movement of unstable earth, clay, rock, etc. often following prolonged heavy rain or coastal erosion
- *Coastal flooding/permanent inundation*: the inundation of land areas along the coast that is caused by sea waters over and above normal tidal action
- *Coastal accretion*: the gradual extension of land by natural forces, as in the addition of sand to a beach by ocean currents, or the extension of a floodplain through the deposition of sediments by repeated flooding⁶.

1.10 Physical change to the shoreline is an on-going process. However in the context of climate change impacts – with rising sea levels and an increased intensity, severity and frequency of coastal storms – the rate of coastal change is increasing. Hence the pressing need for **coastal adaptation**. This is defined by Defra as “*the process of becoming adjusted to new conditions, in a way that makes individuals, communities or systems better suited to their environment*”⁷.

1.11 A recent report by Defra and the Environment Agency – *Appraisal of Adaptation Options in Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management*⁸ – provides further insight by highlighting the various interpretations of adaptation and adaptability. For appraisal purposes, it defines adaptability as “*the characteristics of a plan, strategy or scheme that sustain and enhance the function of a system in the face of continuing change or uncertainty*”. On this definition, then, adaptation and adaptability is not an end-state but an approach which is flexible, keeps options open, and allows the strategy or scheme to evolve to support the functioning of a system.

Our focus... and the implications

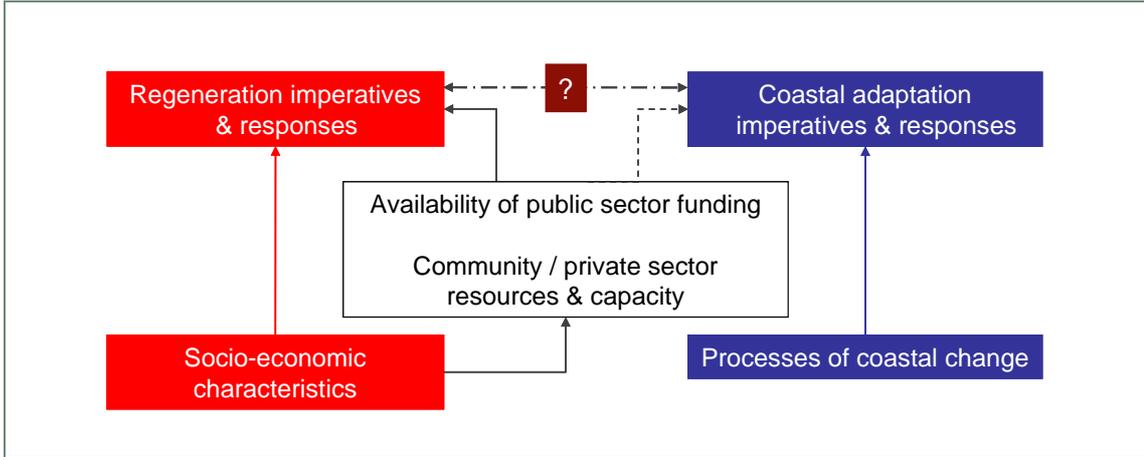
1.12 Consistent with our Terms of Reference, the focus of this study has been *on the issues that arise when there is a coincidence of regeneration and adaptation need*, as illustrated in the figure below. By definition, this has meant that we have focused on the settled – rather than uninhabited – coast and *our principal building block has been the East of England’s coastal settlements*. However we have sought to define these quite broadly, examining settlements of very different sizes and looking beyond the built-up areas into the surrounding countryside and coastline. As a corollary, our working definitions of regeneration and coastal adaptation have also been cast reasonably broadly, focusing as much on the processes of change as the inputs to it or outcomes from it.

⁶ Consultation on Coastal Change Policy, Defra 2009

⁷ Consultation on Coastal Change Policy, Defra 2009

⁸ The Appraisal of Adaptation Option in Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management, Defra/ EA, March 2010

Figure 1-1: Key relationships defining the focus for the study

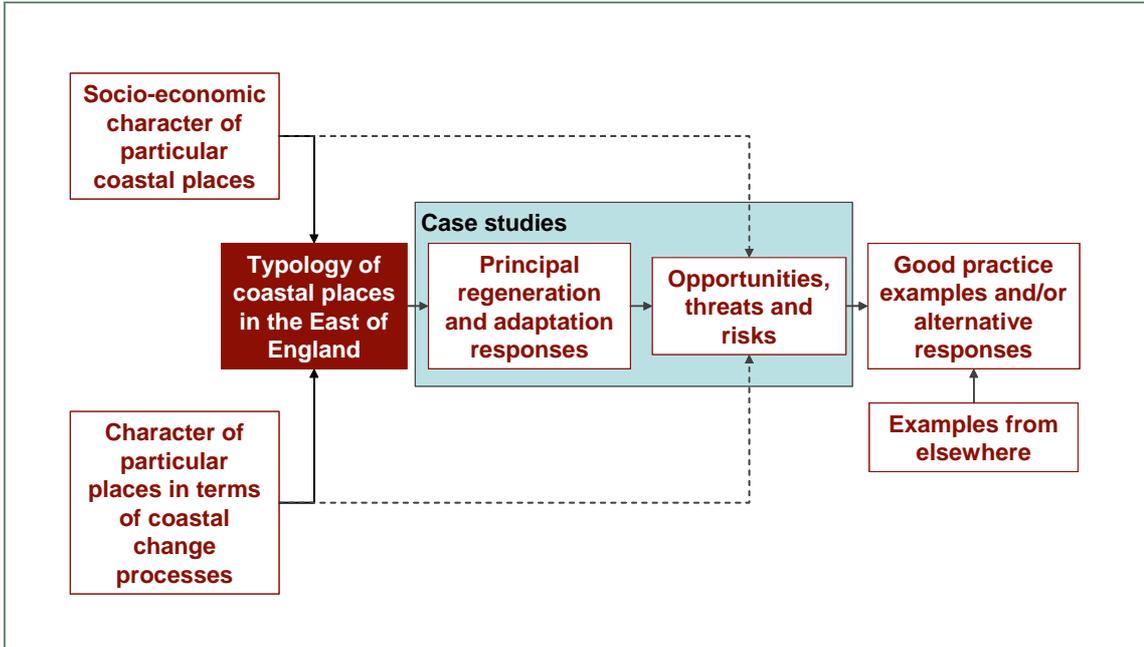


Source: SQW

Our approach

1.13 In broad terms, the approach we developed in response is summarised in Figure 1-2. We began by completing a baseline assessment of thirty “coastal places” within the East of England, reflecting both on their socio-economic character and the issues they are facing with regard to coastal change. From this assessment, we developed a typology of “coastal places”. For two clusters of geographically proximate “coastal places” drawn from different parts of the typology, we then completed a more in-depth review of extant approaches to regeneration and coastal adaptation. These case studies relied both on an in-depth review of relevant policy documents and consultation with relevant local authorities, local stakeholders and others. We also examined practice elsewhere. Drawing together these empirical – and often settlement-specific – findings, we sought to distil lessons for the future, both in terms of possible solutions but also areas for further investigation.

Figure 1-2: Study methodology



Source: SQW

Report structure

- 1.14 In essence, this report is simply an exploration of the relationships depicted in Figure 1-1 which is structured around the approach illustrated in Figure 1-2. It is divided into three main parts, each with a number of component chapters:
- **Part A** describes the baselining process and it presents the typology of coastal places derived through it
 - **Part B** explores that typology in some detail, using case studies of “coastal places” from within the East of England and focusing on two clusters of settlements
 - **Part C** looks outside of the East of England to present some examples of responding to coastal adaptation and regeneration from elsewhere, and it then sets out some overarching conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.15 Two annexes provide a brief synopsis of the four East of England Coastal Change Pathfinder projects (Annex A) and a list of consultees (Annex B). In a separate volume, we provide a detailed review of the local policy framework in each of our case study “coastal places”.

Part A: Characterising the East of England’s “coastal places”

2: Profiling the East of England’s “coastal places”

Defining our “coastal places”

2.1 In both socio-economic and environmental terms, the East of England’s “coastal places” are extremely diverse. In order to generate some sense of their overall character and circumstances, we agreed with our Steering Group to examine 30 settlements. These were selected on the basis that:

- they were identified as a coastal resort within the Coastal Communities Alliance publication, “*Coastal Regeneration in English Resorts – 2010*”; and/or
- they were included within a baselining/benchmarking study commissioned by the East of England Coastal Initiative from Steve Fothergill and colleagues at Sheffield Hallam University⁹; and/or
- they were identified as a regeneration priority within the East of England Plan; and/or
- they were otherwise identified as noteworthy by members of our Steering Group.

2.2 The 30 settlements included all of the larger coastal towns and a good number of smaller settlements. Their physical settings were very varied as were their socio-economic characteristics. Hence while the list of 30 settlements was not – and could not be – fully comprehensive, it was thought to provide a good indication of the range of circumstances that both define – and face – the region’s “coastal places”. A list of the 30 settlements is provided in the table below.

Table 2-1: Coastal settlements

Coastal settlement	Coastal settlement	Coastal settlement
Aldeburgh	Harwich	Maldon
Brightlingsea	Heacham	Mundesley
Burnham Market	Hemsby	Sheringham
Burnham on Crouch	Hopton	Southend-on-Sea
Caister	Hunstanton	Southwold
Canvey Island	Ipswich	Tollesbury
Clacton-on-Sea	Jaywick	Walton on the Naze / Frinton on Sea
Cromer	Kessingland	Wells next the Sea
Felixstowe	King's Lynn	West Mersea
Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston)	Lowestoft	Winterton on Sea

Source: SQW

⁹ Later in the report, we refer to the data gathered through this baselining/benchmarking process

Building up a profile of the settlements

- 2.3 For each of the 30 settlements, we sought to build up a baseline profile drawing on a range of both socio-economic and environmental indicators. These indicators – and the rationales for choosing them – are summarised in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Key indicators used to profile the East of England's "coastal places"

Indicator	Rationale
Resident population	This is the key indicator of settlement size – with implications for economic sustainability, etc., but also the range of feasible regeneration and adaptation responses
Percentage of population aged more than 60/65	Many coastal settlements are considered to have become destinations for retirees and hence their demographic structure is quite distinctive. This again has implications for regeneration and adaptation responses
Employment rate (% of working age population in employment)	This is an important indicator in terms of economic vibrancy and it points to the extent to which local people are in employment. Note though that there is no presumption that these jobs are locally based
Overall deprivation rank from the Index of Multiple Deprivation	This is an overall measure of deprivation, based on a bundle of indicators including income deprivation, barriers to housing, etc.
Digital exclusion	Digital exclusion has been defined simply by BT in terms of "not having access to the internet". Increasingly, key services are delivered on-line and those who cannot access good quality internet connectivity may be disadvantaged as a result. Drawing on data from a study commissioned by Defra ¹⁰ , this indicator therefore relates to a key infrastructure and hence provides some sense of the scope for economic adaptation
Landscape character – measured in terms of proximity to an AONB, heritage coast or national park ¹¹	Although an imperfect measure, this indicator provides some sense of the natural environmental assets which are accessible to individual "coastal places". In theory, these could provide a spur to economic growth, either through tourism or because of the quality of life they signal (which may be important in terms of inward investment)
Historic environment score – defined as the density of scheduled ancient monuments per head of population	This indicator provides an indication of the quality of heritage assets within the coastal settlement. Again, this can be important in terms of the quality of the built environment and other aspects of the area's quality of life
Biodiversity assets – defined in terms of proximity to internationally designated habitats	This indicator is important for two reasons. First, it says something of the importance of the area's biodiversity assets, and this tends to go hand-in-glove with the quality of the natural environment. Second, it might place some restrictions on the range of adaptation (and regeneration) responses, given the legal requirement (under EU law) to conserve key elements of the habitats
Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) policy over different epochs	This assessment is important in summarising the coastal change processes that have been identified and also the proposed response. SMPs are important in informing local planning policy

Source: SQW

Characterising the 30 "coastal places"

- 2.4 As the context for the remainder of this report, it is helpful to draw out some of the headlines from the coastal profiles. These provide the backdrop to both adaptation and regeneration responses within the East of England's coastal settlements.

¹⁰ *An assessment and practical guidance on next generation access (NGA) risk in the UK* A report by Analysys Mason for CLG and Defra, March 2010

¹¹ Note that other approaches are possible in relation to landscape character. For example, the Landscape Design team at Essex County Council completed an extensive Landscape Character Assessment of the Essex Coast

2.5 In socio-economic terms, the following observations are noteworthy:

- overall, the resident population of the 30 settlements numbers about 730,000, equivalent to around 13% of the East of England total. Within this, the largest settlement – Southend on Sea – has a resident population of 164,000 while the smallest – Southwold – is home to 1,195 people; the largest four settlements have a larger aggregate population than the other 26 in combination, demonstrating that the size distribution is heavily skewed
- the 30 settlements vary enormously in terms of their demographic make-up. For five of the settlements, the proportion of the population aged above 60 (for women) or 65 (for men) is in excess of 40% while for six, it is less than 25%. Generally speaking, it is the smaller coastal settlements which have a particularly high incidence of elderly people. Conversely, within the larger settlements, the demographic profile is broadly similar to the regional average
- employment rates range from almost 80% in Southwold to less than 50% in Jaywick. Within the East of England as a whole, the average employment rate is about 77%; the mean figure for the coastal settlements is a good bit lower. In many cases, low employment rates are one of the most important indicators of malaise within the local economy
- according to Lower layer Super Output Area (LSOA) data from the Indices of Deprivation (2007), the most deprived coastal settlement in the East of England is Jaywick, followed by Clacton-on-Sea and Great Yarmouth. Jaywick scores particularly badly on the IMD domains linked to employment and skills/training, consistent with the low employment rates noted above¹². Aldeburgh and Tollesbury are the least deprived of our 30 coastal settlements.

2.6 In environmental terms, we would make the following observations, based on our profiles:

- a good number of our coastal settlements are located in – or very close to – areas of outstanding landscape quality. Winterton-on-Sea, for example, abuts the Norfolk Broads while Wells-next-the-Sea is within the North Norfolk Heritage Coast. Other settlements are further from nationally recognised and designated landscapes
- in terms of the historic environment, Burnham Market, Southwold and Aldeburgh score very highly while the quality of the historic environment is – in objective terms – poorer in Caister, Canvey Island and Clacton
- with regard to biodiversity – defined in terms of proximity to internationally designated habitats – Cromer, Sheringham and Maldon score strongly while the assets within the immediate vicinity of Clacton, Hopton and Mundesley appear to be weaker.

¹² Note that on the recently published 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Jaywick is identified as the most deprived area in England

2.7 Of particular importance in characterising the physical settings of our 30 settlements are the insights provided by the relevant Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). SMPs are – in some respects – difficult documents because they summarise both the evidence base with regard to coastal change and, at a strategic level, the suggested response; the latter is coloured strongly by the socio-economic context and hence it is not a “pure” statement of the challenges of coastal change processes. Across our 30 settlements, it is not surprising that – in the vast majority of cases – the preferred policy from the relevant SMP is to “*hold the line*” over all three SMP epochs. However there are some exceptions; for example, the policy for the stretch of coastline adjacent to Hemsby is one of “*no active intervention*”. In the medium-long term, the areas of coast on which Caister, Mundesley and Jaywick are sited are also facing SMP policies which suggest something other than “*hold the line*”¹³. More generally, while the policy is to defend most settlements, there are a number for which adjacent areas are facing “*managed realignment*” or “*no active intervention*”, either now, or in the foreseeable future. Hence the coastline around these settlements is likely to change in significant ways, even if the settlements themselves are defended. In this context, the prospect of a cusped coast is – for a number of our settlements – a real one and that in turn could impact on their socio-economic character and well-being.

¹³ In each of Caister, Mundesley and Jaywick, some measure of managed realignment was planned in the third epoch (2055 – 2105) in the consultation drafts of the second round SMPs that were available at the time of our analysis

3: Developing a typology of the East of England's "coastal places"

- 3.1 Drawing on the profiles described in Chapter 2, it was agreed with our Steering Group that some kind of summary typology was needed to be able to drill down into regeneration and adaptation issues and responses. This needed to embrace both the socio-economic and environmental/coastal change dimensions depicted earlier in Figure 1-1. The agreed typology for characterising coastal settlements took the form of a matrix, defined around these two key axes. Our approach to developing the typology is described in the paragraphs that follow.

Defining the socio-economic axis

- 3.2 Following some discussion, it was agreed that the focus of the socio-economic axis should be **settlement character**, defined in terms of (a) the size of the resident population and (b) settlement functionality.

Resident population

- 3.3 For the majority of settlements, estimates with regard to the *size of the resident population* were generated through the work of Steve Fothergill and colleagues (as referenced in Chapter 2). These estimates were based on LSOA-based definitions of "place" and they then relied on ONS Mid Year Population Estimates for 2008. For settlements not covered in this way, we relied on 2001 Census data from Table KS01. For all settlements, the Fothergill data were cross-checked against Table KS01 to ensure there were no major anomalies.

- 3.4 On this basis, the distribution of our 30 settlements in terms of population size appeared to be as follows:

- resident population >50,000 ("large town") – five settlements
- resident population of between 15,000 and 50,000 ("medium-sized town") – six settlements
- resident population of between 5,000 and 15,000 ("small town") – six settlements
- resident population of ≤5,000 ("small settlement") – thirteen settlements¹⁴.

Settlement functionality

- 3.5 Measures of *settlement functionality* were altogether more complex. As a proxy, we were referred to another piece of work completed recently by Fothergill and colleagues¹⁵. This

¹⁴ On the basis of the Fothergill work, the population of two settlements – Jaywick and Kessingland – was just over 5,000 (but less than 5,100 in both cases). From Census Table KS01, both settlements appeared to have resident populations of well under 5,000. Given contrasting spatial boundaries and the fact that the data are from different years, both sets of observations may well be correct. However it was decided to include Jaywick and Kessingland within the group of smaller settlements.

included, *inter alia*, estimates of employee jobs in seaside tourism, both absolutely and as a proportion of total employee jobs, at the settlement level. The inference was that the higher the dependence on seaside tourism, the more limited the range of settlement functions and the lower the economic diversity.

3.6 Tourism-related jobs are intrinsically difficult to measure because (a) they cut across a range of conventional Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes and (b) some jobs in all relevant SIC-based sectors are wholly un-related to tourism. Beatty, Fothergill *et al* sought to take account of this and devised a complex methodology which compares coastal settlements to places which are otherwise similar (in terms of scale and catchment) but without a marked tourism profile; the implication is that estimates of employee jobs in sectors linked to tourism can be adjusted (i.e. scaled downwards) to take account of that part of the employee mix that is serving the local population. On this basis, Beatty, Fothergill *et al* derived estimates of employee jobs in seaside tourism across 17 of our 30 settlements; as a proportion of all employee jobs, these ranged from 4% in Southend to 78% in Hemsby.

3.7 However the methodology was not set out in sufficient detail to be able to apply it straightforwardly to the “missing 13” settlements. Hence to fill the gaps, we made some broad-brush estimates by drawing on local knowledge and making comparisons to the benchmarks generated by Beatty, Fothergill *et al*.

3.8 On this basis, the distribution of our 30 settlements in terms of the dependence on employee jobs linked to tourism was estimated to be as follows:

- <20% of employee jobs in tourism – thirteen settlements
- 20-40% of employee jobs in tourism – nine settlements
- >40% of employee jobs in tourism – eight settlements.

3.9 However, the data relating to the sectoral profile of employee jobs at a settlement level are suspect; the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) at the scale of LSOAs is just not robust. Because of this, we were reluctant to take the analysis too far and – on reflection – decided to rely instead on a simple high/low distinction with the key threshold being 40%. This threshold is arbitrary at one level, but it does say something about settlement function.

Bringing the two socio-economic domains together

3.10 Combining the population size and settlement functionality criteria, we ended up dividing our 30 settlements into five groups. Only among “small settlements” (with a population of <=5,000) did the proportion of employee jobs in tourism ever exceed 40%; hence this group was subdivided using the functionality criterion. In all other cases, the population size criterion prevailed.

¹⁵ Beatty, Fothergill, Gore and Wilson (June 2010), *The Seaside Tourist Industry in England and Wales: employment, economic output, location and trends*

Coastal change axis

- 3.11 As explained in Chapter 1, Coastal change is defined by Defra simply as “*physical change to the shoreline*” and four key coastal change processes are identified in principle: erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and coastal accretion. Given the coastal geomorphology of the East of England – and the aims of this study – two of these processes were considered to be especially important: erosion and permanent inundation. Many of the region’s coastal settlements are sited in areas experiencing one or both of these processes, albeit to varying degrees.
- 3.12 Taken at face value, Shoreline Management Plans are not especially helpful in terms of unpicking these issues insofar as they relate to coastal settlements because – as explained in Chapter 2 – existing policy is to defend larger settlements, irrespective of the type or intensity of the risk associated with coastal change. Hence, for every sizable settlement, the policy set out in the relevant SMP is the same: to “*hold the line*”. Yet we know that the issues are different and that both the cost and consequences of “*hold the line*” vary substantially.
- 3.13 In discussion therefore, it was agreed that the coastal change axis needed to be defined according to the predominant type of coastal change *and* the degree of tension with active coastal processes. This translated into a four-way classification, as follows:
- coastal areas under threat from **erosion**, differentiating between:
 - areas where there is high degree of tension with active coastal processes
 - areas where there is less tension with (and therefore less immediate threat from) active coastal processes
 - coastal areas under threat from coastal inundation (i.e. **coastal flood risk**), differentiating between:
 - areas where there is high degree of tension with active coastal processes
 - areas where there is less tension with (and therefore less immediate threat from) active coastal processes.
- 3.14 In broad terms, settlements were categorised in these terms with reference to the relevant SMP but also on the basis of substantive inputs from Steering Group members, particularly officers from the Environment Agency.

Populating the Typology

- 3.15 Putting the two axes together, we derived a matrix with, potentially, 20 discrete cells. This was then populated by our 30 settlements and the outcome is shown in the figure below. Note that in all cases, there was some element of judgement in populating the typology and, by definition, the typology is simplifying (greatly) a complex set of circumstances. Hence the positioning of individual settlements should be regarded as indicative rather than definitive. Moreover several settlements occupy more than one cell (because they are subject to multiple processes of coastal change).

Figure 3-1: Settlement typology

		Coastal Change Axis				
		Coastal flood risk		Coastal erosion		
		High tension with processes	Low tension with processes	High tension with processes	Low tension with processes	
Settlement size (resident population) and functionality	Socio-Economic Axis	Large town (>50,000)	Southend* Great Yarmouth Lowestoft	Ipswich	Southend* Clacton	
	Medium-sized town (15,000-50,000)	Canvey Island Felixstowe* Frinton/Walton*	King's Lynn Harwich Frinton/Walton* Maldon	Felixstowe*		
	Small town (5,000-15,000)	Burnham-on-Crouch	Brightlingsea West Mersea		Caister Cromer Sheringham	
	Small settlement – mixed economy (< 5,000)	Southwold*	Burnham Market Tollesbury Kessingland Wells-next-the-Sea	Mundesley Southwold*	Winterton-on-Sea	
	Small settlement – tourism-dependent (< 5,000)	Aldeburgh Heacham Jaywick		Hemsby	Hopton Hunstanton	

* settlement appears more than once because it is affected by multiple processes of coastal change

Source: SQW

Immediate reflections on the typology

3.16 Reflecting on the content of Figure 3-1, we can make some immediate – but important – observations, some of which are actually hypotheses with regard to the relationships between imperatives for regeneration and coastal adaptation set out previously in Figure 1-1:

- first – and most obviously – 16 of the possible 20 cells are populated and only four are “empty”. This simply re-confirms the diversity of circumstances that surround the region’s coastal settlements: it is within this overall context that approaches to both regeneration and adaptation need to be understood and developed
- among the five larger settlements, it is apparent that two are facing significant issues arising from coastal flooding, one is under significant environmental stress as a result of coastal erosion and a fourth (Southend-on-Sea) is facing both of the principal processes of coastal change. Hence four of the five larger coastal settlements are in high tension with coastal processes. While the SMP policy in all cases is to “*hold the line*”, the costs – and challenges – of so doing should not be underestimated, recognising that this in turn necessarily provides the backdrop to the development and implementation of regeneration strategies and plans
- Jaywick and Aldeburgh – the most and least deprived of the coastal settlements (see paragraph 2.5) – are situated within the same cell within Figure 3-1. This suggests in turn that neither settlement character nor the predominant coastal change process is

necessarily a good indicator of the extent of the regeneration challenge: other factors evidently are in play

- settlements in close geographical proximity can find themselves in very different places within Figure 3-1. This is unsurprising on the socio-economic axis (given the way in which it has been defined) but it is important with regard to issues of coastal change. Hunstanton and Heacham, for example, are less than 5 km apart, yet whilst the former is judged to be in low tension with processes of coastal erosion, the latter is considered to be facing serious issues in terms of coastal flooding. The implication is that adaptation imperatives may vary profoundly on a reasonably localised basis and this in turn must define the context for any kind of response.

Part B: Exploring the typology through clusters of case studies

4: Introducing the clusters of case studies

- 4.1 The typology described in Chapter 3 immediately generates an intriguing set of observations and hypotheses with regard to the relationships between the different components of Figure 1-1 (see Chapter 1).
- 4.2 Potentially, important insights could have been gleaned from many different parts of the East of England. However within the context of this study, we agreed with our Steering Group to examine these issues in more detail by focusing on two clusters of geographically proximate coastal places. The first cluster was built around the Essex settlements of Clacton-on-Sea, Jaywick, Brightlingsea and West Mersea. The second was Norfolk-based and it included Winterton-on-Sea, Hemsby, Caister and Great Yarmouth. As Figure 4-1 below demonstrates, each cluster of case studies encapsulated a range of circumstances as defined through the typology.

Figure 4-1: Situating our case study settlements within the typology

	Coastal flood risk		Coastal erosion	
	High tension with processes	Low tension with processes	High tension with processes	Low tension with processes
Large town			CLACTON	
Medium-sized town				
Small town		BRIGHTLINGSEA WEST MERSEA		
Small settlement – mixed				
Small settlement – tourism	JAYWICK			

	Coastal flood risk		Coastal erosion	
	High tension with processes	Low tension with processes	High tension with processes	Low tension with processes
Large town	GREAT YARMOUTH			
Medium-sized town				
Small town				CAISTER
Small settlement – mixed			HEMSBY	WINTERTON-ON-SEA
Small settlement – tourism				

Source: SQW

4.3 In Chapters 5 and 6, we summarise the regeneration and coastal adaptation issues and responses facing each of the case study settlements. Chapter 7 then seeks to draw some summary conclusions by looking back at the case studies against the backdrop of the typology.

5: Regeneration and coastal adaptation issues and responses: Clacton-on-Sea, Jaywick, Brightlingsea and West Mersea

Introduction

- 5.1 Our first cluster of case study settlements is situated on the south-facing coast of Essex. It extends from Clacton-on-Sea in the east to West Mersea in the west, and it also includes the settlements of Jaywick and Brightlingsea. West Mersea is located in the borough of Colchester; the other three settlements are all within the district of Tendring. The distance from Clacton-on-Sea to West Mersea is about 15 km “as the crow flies”, but by road, the two settlements are approaching 40 km apart, a journey that effectively extends along the two banks of the Colne Estuary, touches the southern fringes of Colchester, and takes around 50 minutes (by car). The four settlements therefore are a good deal more proximate in a physical sense than in terms of the socio-economic flows and connectivities, and this is borne out through their regeneration challenges and responses.
- 5.2 In the paragraphs that follow we consider each settlement in turn, focusing on the regeneration/adaptation challenges/opportunities it is facing; the solutions that are being implemented in response; and any “crunch” issues that are likely to arise in the future. The discussion is supported by a detailed policy review (provided in a separate volume). The figure below summarises key elements of the policy framework.

Figure 5-1: Key elements of the policy framework for Clacton-on-Sea, Jaywick, Brightlingsea and West Mersea

	Clacton-on-Sea	Jaywick	Brightlingsea	West Mersea
Colchester Adopted Core Strategy (December 2008)				✓
Tendring Local Plan (Adopted 2008)	✓	✓	✓	
Emerging Tendring LDF: Core Strategy & Development Policies (Consultation opened October 2010)	✓	✓	✓	
Interim Planning Policy for Jaywick: (Approved by Tendring DC Cabinet in December 2010, but rescinded in January 2011)		✓		
Sustainable Community Strategy: <i>Tendring Together</i> , published by Tendring Local Strategic Partnership (2007)	✓	✓	✓	
Sustainable Community Strategy: <i>Colchester 2020</i> , published by Colchester Local Strategic Partnership (2009)				✓

	Clacton-on-Sea	Jaywick	Brightling sea	West Mersea
Jaywick Strategic Flood Risk Study (2008)		✓		
Tendring District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (March 2009)	✓		✓	
Mid Essex Area – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2006)				✓
Essex Shoreline Management Plan (April 1997)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Essex & South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (Consultation draft circulated March 2010) (draft ESSMP)	✓ Policy Dev. Zone C3	✓ Policy Dev. Zone C4	✓ Policy Dev. Zone D4	✓ Policy Dev. Zones E2,E3

Source: SQW

Clacton-on-Sea

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement in the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 5.3 Clacton-on-Sea, with a population of 54,000, is one of the largest coastal towns in the East of England. It is the largest settlement in the district of Tendring. Clacton grew as a tourist resort and tourism remains important for the local economy. However, like many seaside towns, Clacton's economy has been in decline since the advent of low cost foreign holidays. As a result, its offer – pier, amusements, beach and waterfront – is in need of investment and reinvention to cater for a new generation of holiday makers. The town as a whole is characterised by low employment rates and high levels of deprivation.
- 5.4 Against this backdrop, Clacton was identified in the East of England Plan as a Priority Area for Regeneration. It was also designated as a Key Centre for Development and Change (in the expectation that it would accommodate significant housing growth). Given these strategic priorities, Clacton received significant regeneration/growth funding from EEDA, the HCA, the Safer & Stronger Communities Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund during the last decade. Some of this funding was channelled through the Haven Gateway Partnership: its Integrated Development Plan (IDP), *Smarter Solutions for Sustainable Growth* (2008), included a focus on coastal town regeneration. Additionally InTend (the regeneration company formed by Tendring District Council to focus on economic regeneration in the district) has been active in contributing to the regeneration of Clacton. The focus of activity for all partners has been regenerating Clacton's Town Centre and its Seafront with the aim of restoring and updating the town's Victorian assets, notably the Pier and the Seafront Gardens.
- 5.5 Clacton's main environmental assets are its long blue-flag beaches and its picturesque hinterland of historic towns and villages. The town itself is well protected by sea defences and will continue to be protected in the long term: it is sited on relatively high ground and so is not vulnerable to the immediate effects of coastal flooding. However, its chief asset, the

beach, is affected by coastal processes; it is steadily being eroded by sediment drift both northwards and southwards. The cost of maintaining the defences and securing the beach will increase over time as a result of rising sea levels.

- 5.6 Consistent with these observations, within our typology Clacton is identified as a **large town in high tension with the processes of coastal erosion**. It is similar, in some respects, to Southend-on-Sea which, although a much bigger town and resort, is facing similar issues with regard to its beach.

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 5.7 At a regional level, Clacton has been a recognised priority for regeneration and growth. As such, it has been able to access the main sources of economic development and regeneration funding. Its economic regeneration plans have been (and are) coherent, focused on two main priorities: the regeneration of the Seafront and Town Centre, and the regeneration of West Clacton (to accommodate both the town's expansion and, potentially, any resettlement of communities from neighbouring Jaywick).
- 5.8 Looking ahead – and focusing particularly on the interface between regeneration and coastal adaptation – the major issue facing Clacton at a settlement level concerns the town's beach.

Proposals and funding to secure the long term future of Clacton's beach

- 5.9 The current Local Plan proposes a scheme to build 13 offshore breakwaters across the Clacton frontage and to recharge the beaches with imported sand against the sea wall. The thinking is that this should absorb wave energy and so prevent the sea wall from being undermined. It has been proposed that existing timber groynes and concrete breakwaters should be removed and the new beach levels encouraged to rise. This in turn should “*creat[e] large expanses of open sandy beach at all states of the tide*”, thereby providing important amenities for tourism, including opportunities for sheltered summer moorings and launching facilities. Although approved in principle, this scheme has not secured funding from Defra; consequently the Environment Agency and Tendring District Council have committed to developing revised proposals by 2012. In the meantime, short term repairs will be carried out as necessary.
- 5.10 Despite uncertainty over the sea defence solution, regeneration is proceeding on the premise that the beach will be retained and facilities for watersports will be enhanced. A good deal of effort has been devoted to developing regeneration proposals linking the town centre to the seafront and the beach. However the commitments for defences and beach recharge (on which these regeneration proposals effectively depend) are not guaranteed: funding solutions remain to be found.
- 5.11 Currently, Clacton's regeneration solutions are premised on a vibrant tourism industry and that in turn presupposes that the beach is in place. Existing regeneration strategies and plan documents do not explicitly acknowledge that the beach is under considerable threat, or that proposed solutions are currently unfunded (although we understand that options and alternatives are actively being pursued by the Council behind the scenes). Although some of the proposals – for coastal paths, developments on the pier and seafront, and potentially

launches for watersports – are consistent with a widening of the offer from ‘bucket and spade’ tourism, the opportunity to reduce the tourism sector’s dependency on the beach does not appear to be part of the underlying rationale or at least not one that is explicitly stated.

Jaywick

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement in the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 5.12 Jaywick is a small settlement with a population of just over 5,000. It is located to the west of Clacton and the two settlements are separated by the town’s golf club and airfield. Jaywick grew in the 1920s and 1930s through a series of high density *plotland* developments of large beach huts and chalets in three locations: Brooklands, Grasslands and in the Village. Despite the initial lack of basic services and facilities (e.g. sewage, street lighting and adopted roads), the chalets were popular, especially with Londoners looking for an affordable seaside home. Permanent occupancy increasingly started to replace holiday use after the Second World War with many of the Eastenders who had moved up to Jaywick to escape the bombing deciding to stay¹⁶. Although the area suffered from poor housing and low levels of investment, there was a strong community spirit amongst residents and this still remains.
- 5.13 Jaywick is a very deprived neighbourhood with the lowest average LSOA 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation rank of all the coastal settlements examined in this study¹⁷. The employment rate amongst residents is also low with 48% of the working age population in employment in 2008. Jaywick suffers from low incomes and poor health, and its poor services and facilities have compounded issues of multiple deprivation. It is estimated that 80% of Brooklands and 50% of Grasslands properties are privately-rented, with many tenants on housing benefits. As we consider below, issues of housing condition and tenure are central to the challenges of both regeneration and adaptation in Jaywick.
- 5.14 Coastal management at Jaywick is considered “*very complex and sensitive*”¹⁸, particularly for lower lying parts of the settlement. Considerable investments were made in sea defences by the Environment Agency in the 1980s and again in the last few years¹⁹. Although the area is now defended to a high standard, it is in a high risk flood zone which effectively rules out further development other than in exceptional circumstances; this is the fundamental “*crux*” of the regeneration challenge. There have been repeated attempts to relocate residents because of both the fundamental unsuitability of the accommodation and the fact that the area is extremely vulnerable to coastal flooding (which has implications also for access to the settlement). In addition, attempts have been made to improve the estates and revert homes to holiday uses. Although both the abortive 2006 masterplanning exercise (which would no longer be practical as a result of the introduction of PPS25 (Development and Coastal Change)) and the (now rescinded) 2010 interim planning policy (that could have provided the framework for this change) prompted protest from residents, the Jaywick Neighbourhood

¹⁶ OASE 59, The Plotlands Experience: The Self-Build Settlements of Southeast England, 2003

¹⁷ In the recently published 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Jaywick was ranked as the most deprived area in England moving up from 3rd most deprived in the 2007 ranking

¹⁸ Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 2: Draft plan for public consultation, Environment Agency, March 2010

¹⁹ This has included beach recharging and the installation of additional defences, including groynes

Team is working with the residents of Jaywick (through the Jaywick Community Forum, the Homeowner Occupier Group and other local groups) in this broad context. Whilst the surrounding issues are challenging and the changes proposed are not universally popular, this type of engagement is considered to have contributed to recent improvements in the relationship between the authorities and the residents of Jaywick

- 5.15 Within our typology, Jaywick is identified as a **small settlement in high tension with coastal flood risk processes**.

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 5.16 Much of Jaywick is at risk of flooding, with the low lying sub-standard chalet estates particularly vulnerable. Since the 1970s, the local authority has made repeated attempts to address the dual problems of density and quality using both ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ approaches. The aim of current planning policy is to encourage the replacement of large numbers of sub-standard properties with lower density, ‘flood-resistant’ homes, thereby reducing the number of people living in poor-quality, ‘at risk’, dwellings and improving the environment. By and large, the policy has had little effect. It has not led to new residential development for two main reasons: the high cost of meeting the building requirements for the homes to be safe over their lifetime and the price of existing plots (which makes most development commercially unviable). The lack of new build has had wider ramifications for it is, effectively, the lynchpin of conventional approaches to regeneration.

Chalet estate residents

- 5.17 One specific challenge surrounds the price of property in Jaywick and the cumulative consequences that follow. As we explain in the paragraphs below, conventional mechanisms to effect relocation, such as council purchase at market value, have generally failed because the cost of dwellings is so much lower than elsewhere and there remains demand for very low cost housing from landlord investors and from those who cannot afford to buy elsewhere.
- 5.18 Over the years, many people have bought property in Jaywick because it is cheap; chalets have recently been sold for less than £50,000²⁰. The house price differential however means that it is virtually impossible to move elsewhere without additional funds: median house prices are £120,000 in Tendring. As a result, attempts to buy back the properties on the open market would have a limited effect: if the local authority offers to buy a chalet, the price paid will reflect the independent estimate of the property’s value which would not support a purchase elsewhere.
- 5.19 In recent years, increasing numbers of chalets in Grasslands and Brooklands have been rented out privately, primarily to tenants on housing benefit. Landlords can make a high rate of return on their investment. In 2005, 45% of households in Jaywick were in receipt of housing and/or council tax benefits, the highest proportion within any coastal community in the East of England²¹. Until recently, the housing benefit system incentivised tenants to find low cost accommodation by paying up to £15 per week to cover any difference between rental levels

²⁰ See www.houseprices.co.uk for post code CO15 2RG

²¹ Fothergill (2010) Benchmarking data for East of England Coastal Communities, DWP 2005 & 2001 Census of Population

and the local housing allowance rate. This also helped drive demand for very cheap rented accommodation in Jaywick²².

- 5.20 One illustration of a ‘carrot’ to facilitate relocation of residents were the new homes adjacent to the Grasslands estate built by the Guinness Trust in 2000. Owners of the property in worst condition were offered places in these new properties at ‘affordable’ rents; however the targeted take-up was low. Another new development at nearby Jaywick Lane in West Clacton, north of the golf course, is also proposed. The development of 392 homes was approved by a Planning Inspector in May 2010 after appeal. Full planning permission has been granted on 157 flats, mostly social housing, with 235 dwellings receiving outline permission. The s106 contribution from this development is also intended to support a programme of regeneration in Jaywick itself. The long-term plan to offer residents from Jaywick more attractive relocation options is likely to be very dependent on the success of the ‘West Clacton Vision’ which aims to offer quality housing for the residents of Brooklands and Grasslands estates as well as other local people. However, the success of this venture is far from certain²³: even if finance is made available to assist owner-occupiers in Jaywick, it is uncertain what opportunities there might be for the majority of residents who are renting privately, particularly if they are dependent on housing benefit and not considered as ‘at risk’ or ‘vulnerable’.
- 5.21 A degree of mistrust between residents and ‘authority’ has developed over the years and is deep seated. A masterplanning exercise in 2006 (which was considered to have been imposed top-down) and interim planning policy in 2010 (which was criticised for being developed without sufficient consultation) have not helped matters. Attractive alternatives need to be developed, as for some residents, the combination of proximity to the beach and a close knit community are strongly valued. As intimated above, the latest regeneration partnership has been established on a much broader basis in terms of community and agency involvement to address some of these challenges. However its objectives may well now be stymied by the lack of public funds to support the investment required to achieve significant changes in housing and the environment. The accompanying programmes for neighbourhood and community development may also be adversely affected by cuts in central government grants to district councils. Finance is required for new homes in safer locations, associated services and for compensation – but this is a very expensive approach.

Sequential and exception tests

- 5.22 Current development policy tightly restricts development in Jaywick. There have been strict design stipulations with the over-riding aim of reducing the density of dwellings in areas

²² It is worth noting that proposed changes to housing benefit are due to come into force in April 2011 and these may act as a further barrier. As most properties are small and sub-standard, rents are relatively low; they are likely to fall below the new threshold for the payment of housing benefit. Recent changes also mean an end to excess payments so tenants will lose their £15 week excess payment but will continue to get all their rent covered by housing benefit if they are on sufficiently low incomes. With tenants reliant on housing benefit displaced from private sector properties there may be a steady demand for the chalets – both from would-be landlords and tenants. This could extend to local authorities seeking to discharge their responsibility for finding vulnerable homeless households a private sector tenancy. Demand for rented chalets could grow, thereby making it even more difficult to reduce the numbers of permanently occupied dwellings in Jaywick

²³ In the current financial climate it seems highly unlikely that the Social Housing Grant will be available from HCA to fund the construction of new affordable homes out of the flood risk zone to offer to chalet residents – be they owners or tenants – even if residents are willing to move

vulnerable to flooding and enhancing design and safety standards. This required all new homes to be of 3 storeys, with no residential accommodation on the ground floor and for building plots of at least 225 sq m (three times bigger than existing plot sizes).

- 5.23 Although it has been discouraged, development is not ruled out altogether. Proposals have to be considered against the ‘sequential test’ of PPS25 which generally presumes against development in an area of flood risk. However, in the case of Jaywick, the benefits of regeneration may outweigh the risk of flooding and proposals for development must be assessed against the ‘exceptions test’. This requires any redevelopment to be shown to be safe for the life of that development; it generally favours higher ground, particularly for more vulnerable developments such as health facilities and housing; and it requires that new development should not increase the overall flood risk. In practice the conditions for this test are very hard to satisfy.
- 5.24 Some residents consider the planning policy ambiguous and this position may have blighted Jaywick further. However, Tendring District Council’s new *Interim Planning Policy for Jaywick* (approved December 2010 and rescinded January 2011) might have made things clearer, bolstered by PPS25 and the findings from a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The proposed Policy JAY2 sought to prohibit all new permanent residential development in Brooklands and Grasslands; the only form of new accommodation that would be permitted was permanent holiday homes and these could only be occupied between April and August in any one calendar year. All these proposals are still to be considered formally by the local authority.

Brightlingsea

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement form the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 5.25 Brightlingsea is a small town of around 8,750 residents located on Brightlingsea Creek, one of the many creeks running into the Colne Estuary. The town grew around the river and its natural harbour. In the past it has been the location for a major fishing and barge building industry. Today the town centre is thriving with a range of facilities and attractions – including an open air swimming pool and passenger foot ferries to East Mersea, Point Clear and St Oysth. The town has an active set of businesses and community groups which contribute to the sense of relative self containment despite high levels of out-commuting: travelling by train, London Liverpool Street is 1 hour 30 minutes away from nearby Alresford.
- 5.26 Brightlingsea is a sailing centre and the home of Eastern Region Sailing Centre. It is an ideal setting for accessing the navigable channels along the Colne to Colchester and along the Blackwater to Maldon, and it is only one day’s sailing from the Thames Estuary. Brightlingsea Harbour is a small but busy mixed leisure and commercial port. The Harbour Commissioners manage both the harbour and the new Waterside Marina; this is located within the harbour and is part of the mixed use development which made use of the old shipyard site in the Waterside regeneration area. The harbour has recently started to provide services for some of the operational requirements of the forty-eight offshore wind turbine

development at Gunfleet Sands off the coast at Clacton. The operational base for the offshore development is located in Brightlingsea and requires 24 hour access to vessels and fuel over the 40 year life of the windfarm.

- 5.27 Brightlingsea is located in a sensitive setting, surrounded by countryside which has been internationally designated for its habitat importance. The town itself is also attractive with conservation areas and some important historic and listed buildings. The estuary is stable and there has been no significant change in the intertidal morphology over the past 150-200 years. There is sediment build up in the creek which affects the use of the marina and commercial operations but is managed by the dredging of the channels and berths. The town is protected by revetted earth embankments and an inter-tidal zone of mud-flats and salt marsh which dissipates much of the wave energy before it reaches the town.
- 5.28 Within our typology, Brightlingsea is defined as **a small town in low tension with coastal flood risk processes**. Its adaptation issues relate to managing long term change within its hinterland and opportunities for economic development in the town.

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 5.29 Certainly compared to Jaywick and Clacton, Brightlingsea does not have a “regeneration problem” – it is prosperous and successful. The draft ESSSMP policy to defend the town in the short and long term means that adaptation issues do not feature strongly in planning policy. The issues that are currently exercising stakeholders in the town are the ones they have been dealing with for many years – the balancing of environmental and economic interests for sustainability of the estuary.

Transfer of economic and environmental impacts

- 5.30 The draft ESSSMP commitment to continue to defend the town has some implications for the surrounding hinterland: “*managed realignment*” to the east of Brightlingsea on the north shore of Flag Creek at Eastmarsh Point and to the north west of the town at Aldboro Point is proposed in the second epoch of the plan (2026-2055). It is possible that a managed realignment approach may be implemented at an earlier stage at Eastmarsh Point. As yet, no particular scheme for managed realignment has been proposed. Nevertheless, consultation responses effectively anticipate possible schemes and raise issues with regard to their consequences. For example, the Colne Estuary Partnership considers the breach at Eastmarsh could have implications for sediment flow into the Brightlingsea Creek and the amount of dredging that would be necessary for the operation of the harbour and marina where silt build-up is already a problem. It argues that this would impose additional costs on those responsible for the management of the harbour, or otherwise limit use of the port, and the increased dredging itself would have environmental impacts on the fisheries in the area.
- 5.31 All current planning policies expect Brightlingsea to continue to function as a port. However, in general, it is unclear whether SMPs take the secondary implications of coastline management policy into account when assessing managed realignment options. This would necessarily form part of the assessment of any particular scheme.

Increasing demand and competing uses for the estuary

- 5.32 The current local plan is quite firm in restricting any expansion of commercial activity at the port. The draft Core Spatial Strategy similarly puts a strong emphasis on the continued focus for Brightlingsea's role as a centre for leisure and recreational watersports. However there is a need to support continued employment growth within the town and servicing the requirements of offshore wind development is likely to form an important part of the port's role over the next 40 years.
- 5.33 Stakeholders and residents within Brightlingsea seem to be well organised, and they are working to identify and manage the issues and opportunities arising from these developments. As well as managing the harbour, the Harbour Commissioners are central to the management of the new marina and they are integral to negotiations with the offshore wind developers at Gunfleet Sands. Additionally, Brightlingsea has managed – despite reductions in funding – to maintain some dedicated resource to support the continuing work of the Colne Estuary Partnership (this is in contrast to other estuary partnerships such as that at Blackwater). With the particular operational management and research focus of the Colne Estuary Partnership, there is capacity to monitor water quality and the state of defences and habitats, and to engage actively in their management.

Long term flood risk

- 5.34 The longer term flood risk identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has not had a major impact on development plans (as it has in Jaywick). In essence, Brightlingsea is a sustainable settlement in socio-economic terms. In the very long term, and depending on the nature of the schemes proposed, managed realignment to the east and the west of the town could disconnect Brightlingsea from much of its hinterland through the formation of a narrow peninsula. But as long as the town itself is protected, that is not inconsistent with the model for the town's future development.

West Mersea

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement form the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 5.35 West Mersea is a small town located on the western edge of Mersea Island at the mouth of the Colne and Blackwater Estuaries. West Mersea is the main town on the island and is located at the extreme western point. The island is joined to the mainland by a causeway over the low lying saltmarsh and waterways; the causeway, known as the Strood, is submerged for periods on some Spring Tides. West Mersea has a population of around 7,500 and – like Brightlingsea – it enjoys relatively high employment rates and low levels of deprivation.
- 5.36 West Mersea is located in a sensitive and protected landscape near a number of designated sites, including an internationally designated Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, at Mersea Flats, the Colne Estuary and the Blackwater Estuary. The Island is surrounded by a system of creeks, channels and saltings. The foreshore directly in front of the town is a wide area of inter-tidal mud and sand flats. There are no built defences for some parts of West Mersea and the town is naturally well defended; it is sited on higher ground

which is not at risk from tidal flooding. The town's natural defence is provided by Cobmarsh Island, a small offshore saltmarsh which absorbs much of the impact of erosion. However the steady erosion of Cobmarsh from 27ha to 4ha over recent years places the town at much higher risk of flooding.

- 5.37 Within our typology, West Mersea is categorised as **a small town in low tension with coastal erosion**. West Mersea's regeneration and adaptation challenges are associated with securing its economic future and environmental assets within a long term adaptation strategy.

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 5.38 West Mersea does not have an active regeneration policy. Its proposals for development are consistent with the adaptation response set out for the town in the draft ESSSMP since new development is favoured in the town centre and the existing urban fringes. However, the economic heart of West Mersea is the waterfront where planning policy seriously limits new development (although the long term intention is to defend the existing dwellings and commercial activities). The issues for regeneration and adaptation in West Mersea therefore relate to how it can maintain the sustainability of its town in the face of adaptation pressures that restrict further development within its economic core.

Pressure for prime waterfront land

- 5.39 Little growth is proposed in West Mersea but there is demand for more tourist accommodation, watersports facilities and car parking. The draft ESSSMP policy is to maintain defences for all dwellings and key infrastructure and tourism facilities by focusing flood and erosion risk management where it is most needed. West Mersea will have to deliver a continued high quality offer without the opportunity for much, if any, development in its waterfront area.

Loss of habitats and agricultural land

- 5.40 As well as protecting the existing community, the draft ESSSMP has the overall intention of creating new inter-tidal habitats to replace existing ones under pressure from rising sea levels and coastal erosion. "*Managed realignment*" is proposed on the seaward shore of East Mersea and the landward frontage of the Strood Channel neither of which directly affect West Mersea.
- 5.41 In East Mersea, this means that the current policy of "*hold the line*" will be replaced by "*managed realignment*" over the period 2026–2055 (although dwellings and infrastructure will be defended); thereafter the policy reverts to "*hold the line*" in respect to the new alignment. In the Strood Channel, this is likely to mean more salt marsh being subject to flooding in order to reduce the pressure of water on the road link between Mersea Island and the mainland. This should take up tidal energy and reduce flooding risks on the west end of the town. However it will result in the loss of good quality farm land with issues for future food security.

Long term protection and preservation of the waterfront

- 5.42 The Core Strategy that applies to West Mersea was adopted in 2008. It sets out adaptation policies that allow expansion to holiday parks that avoid high risk flood zones and have restricted use during the winter months. In line with PPS25, the presumption is against development in areas at risk of flooding, either now or as a result of climate change. In coastal areas, the policy discourages development that does not intrinsically require a coastal setting.
- 5.43 The long term aim is to protect and enhance the special character of the West Mersea waterside area. Development that expands into the area or affects its character – such as additional residential houseboat moorings – is not permitted. Since there is limited undesirable development in the conservation area, planning policy can take a firm line on development that is consistent with its adaptation and enhancement policy. This is a strong interpretation of PPS25 that does not allow exceptions.

Safe access

- 5.44 There is regular coastal flooding of the coast road and this requires a “flood risk hazard assessment” to be prepared (under the new Flood & Water Management Act, October 2010). The flooding does not, at present, impact on houses/people but it does impact on the accessibility of West Mersea for some of its tourist traffic as well as having implications for emergency access and evacuation. This is a long term adaptation issue. Currently residents are opposed both to the construction of a permanent bridge structure and to proposals to raise the road level. This seems to be borne out of the concern that a permanently available road crossing would change the character of the island.

Implementation of policy

- 5.45 The draft ESSSMP proposes “*hold the line*” for all three epochs for the town’s frontage. However, there are no “hard” coastal defences here or anywhere on Mersea Island and the town’s defence is very dependent on Cobmarsh Island (which acts as a natural ‘hard’ defence). Cobmarsh Island has, however, reduced dramatically in recent years. In the short term, granite boulders have been placed to try and stop the erosion but longer term, the SMP Action Plan will consider a study of the beneficial use of dredgings in locations such as Cobmarsh Island. However, a number of locations are seeking deposits of the same material. It is possible that West Mersea may not be able to secure a natural defence into the future. This in turn has the potential to change the landscape character of this part of the unspoiled and undeveloped Essex coast.

6: Regeneration and coastal adaptation issues and responses: Winterton-on-Sea, Hemsby, Caister, and Great Yarmouth

- 6.1 Our second cluster of settlements is located on a 15 km stretch of the east-facing coast of the Borough of Great Yarmouth. It includes the town of Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston), together with the much smaller settlements of Caister, Hemsby (and Newport) and Winterton-on-Sea; although not included as a case study, this stretch of coastline is also home to Scratby and California which are the focus for one of the Defra-sponsored coastal change pathfinders²⁴.
- 6.2 All four settlements are within the same local authority district – the Borough of Great Yarmouth – and because of this, they share many of the same key policy documents (although different policies may apply). Key elements of the current local policy framework of relevance to regeneration and coastal adaptation are summarised in Figure 6-1 below.

Figure 6-1: Key elements of the policy framework for Great Yarmouth, Caister, Hemsby and Winterton-on-Sea

	Great Yarmouth	Caister	Hemsby	Winterton-on-Sea
Great Yarmouth Local Plan (Adopted 2001) – much of this has been carried forward as the Local Development Framework has yet to be adopted	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emerging Great Yarmouth LDF: Amendment to the Core Strategy (Consultation document, 2009)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emerging Great Yarmouth LDF: Great Yarmouth Waterfront Area Action Plan (Consultation document, 2010)	✓			
Sustainable Community Strategy: <i>Changing Lives</i> , published by Great Yarmouth Local Strategic Partnership (November 2008)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009)	✓			
Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan (Consultation draft, 2006)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan First Review (2010 – technical study – still being considered by local authorities/partners and of no official status)	✓ Policy Units 6.17 & 6.18	✓ Policy Units 6.15 & 6.16	✓ Policy Unit 6.14	✓ Policy Units 6.13 & 6.14

Source: SQW

²⁴ A note of the Scratby/California pathfinder is provided within Annex C

- 6.3 In the paragraphs that follow, we consider each settlement in turn, focusing on the regeneration/adaptation challenges/opportunities it is facing; the solutions that are being implemented in response; and any “crunch” issues that are likely to arise in the future. The discussion is supported by a detailed policy review (provided in a separate volume).

Winterton-on-Sea

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement form the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 6.4 Winterton-on-Sea is a small settlement with a resident population of around 1,600 people. It developed originally as a fishing village, but today, the main economic activities within the village are tourism and local services; there are around 200 employee jobs within the settlement and over recent years, this number appears to have declined. According to our consultees, Winterton-on-Sea’s resident workers tend either to be employed in these local activities, or to work in the offshore energy sector, or to commute to either Norwich or Great Yarmouth. Around 30% of residents are above normal retirement age. In socio-economic terms, the village’s character is different from other settlements within our cluster of case studies. As the village’s website emphasises:

Do not expect amusement arcades or hot dog establishments in our village. Do expect a beautiful sandy and largely unspoiled Norfolk beach, dunes so peaceful that the Tern colony has moved here in recent years... Winterton-on-Sea is near to, but a world away, from Great Yarmouth and our neighbouring village of Hemsby, which is just one mile away²⁵

- 6.5 Winterton-on-Sea is ensconced within a range of designated landscapes. Between the village and the sea, the dunes nature reserve forms the eastern-most tip of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Much of this area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (with RSPB reedbeds) and the Winterton-Horsey Dunes were designated as a Special Area of Conservation in 2005. Inland (to the west), the area abuts the Norfolk Broads.
- 6.6 With regard to coastal processes, Winterton-on-Sea (and its immediate environs) needs to be understood in two parts, separated by Beach Road (and in this context, the loss of the Beach Road café to coastal erosion is an emotive issue locally). The intrinsically most vulnerable area is from Beach Road northwards but here, a sea wall was constructed following the 1953 floods. It extends as far north as Happisburgh and its maintenance is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. This area relies on the hard defences and the SMP (First Review) policy²⁶ is one of “*hold the line*”. To the south of Beach Road, the coast relies on the sand dunes for natural defence and – as long as the supply of sediment from the north continues – the dune system ought to be sustained (although it will evolve). The SMP (First Review) policy is one of “*no active intervention*”.
- 6.7 In terms of governance, Winterton-on-Sea is located close to the boundary between North Norfolk District Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council. Parts of the immediately

²⁵ see <http://www.winterton.myfreeola.com/>

²⁶ References to SMP (First Review) policy are made throughout this chapter. In all cases, they relate to the Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan First Review (May 2010). At the time of writing, this was still being considered by the local authorities/partners and was not of official status

surrounding area – including a portion of the Winterton-Horsey Dunes – are within the territory managed by the Broads Authority.

- 6.8 Within our typology – and taken in the round – Winterton-on-Sea is considered to be **a small settlement facing some threat from the consequences of coastal erosion, but the degree of tension with coastal processes is comparatively low.**

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 6.9 In terms of objective measures of need, Winterton-on-Sea’s imperatives for regeneration on a narrow definition are modest, certainly as compared to other settlements within the Borough of Great Yarmouth. In the emerging Local Development Framework, Winterton-on-Sea is characterised as a “smaller village” and the intention is that there should be very little new development.
- 6.10 However, adopting a broad and multi-faceted definition of “regeneration” – such as that suggested by the Coastal Communities Alliance (see paragraph 1.8) – we might conclude that Winterton-on-Sea has been (and is) active in terms of some elements of “renewal from within”. A Coastal Erosion Steering Group was formed in 2003 in the context of general concern over erosion of the beach and foreshore along the Winterton-on-Sea coastal frontage; the immediate catalyst was the loss of the Beach Road café through coastal erosion. The Coastal Erosion Steering Group reports regularly to the parish council and its objectives are summarised as follows:
- to work on behalf of the village of Winterton-on-Sea to establish all the facts relating to coastal erosion in the area and the coastline in general, and to investigate its causes and effects
 - to establish contacts with all authorities and other interested parties, and to research all opinions, comment on all the information received and establish the validity of such information
 - to present the village’s ultimate argument, and propose the necessary course of action to minimise or obviate the effects and threats of coastal erosion in the village²⁷.
- 6.11 Our consultees suggested that Winterton-on-Sea – primarily through the Coastal Erosion Steering Group – was “punching above its weight” and that it was actively engaging in discussion and debate linked to the development and consequences of the SMP. In “gearing up”, it had been strongly influenced by the situation in North Norfolk (and its proximity to the district boundary is noteworthy in this context); from our consultations, it appeared that two individuals (Peter Frew from North Norfolk District Council and Malcolm Kerby from Happisburgh Coastal Concern Action Group) had been particularly influential, providing advice, information and some support such that the community in Winterton-on-Sea – through the Coastal Erosion Steering Group – had progressively engaged. In terms of what had been achieved, the key outcomes appeared to be strongly process-related: the community was far better informed such that the issues were discussed without causing undue alarm or

²⁷ See <http://www.winterton.myfreeola.com/voice.html>

fear of “property blight” (which was a worry elsewhere and was cited as a reason why communities did not want to engage in the issues surrounding coastal erosion).

- 6.12 Winterton-on-Sea is a small settlement in which – in relative terms – the threat from coastal erosion is modest and the local community appears to be well informed and engaged. Based on a review of both policy documents and secondary data, and our discussions with consultees, two possible issues did however emerge at the interface between regeneration and coastal adaptation; these are discussed briefly below.

Could Winterton-on-Sea be “stranded” at the interface between different designated landscapes?

- 6.13 Whilst the immediate threat to Winterton-on-Sea – as a settlement and a community – as a result of coastal erosion is not thought to be great (relative to elsewhere), rising sea levels are a concern in relation to the nearby Norfolk Broads. Specifically, the issue of saline intrusion is a threat to the low-lying Broads and the raft of habitat-related consequences that would follow. Particularly from our consultations, there was some sense that the issues facing the Broads were bigger than those facing Winterton-on-Sea (and other similar settlements) and that, ultimately, the former might prevail, bolstered by the full weight of European environmental law. Under a scenario of this nature – and it is no more than that – there was concern that the voice of local coastal communities might struggle to be heard.

Looking ahead, will Winterton-on-Sea be a sustainable community in socio-economic terms?

- 6.14 In demographic terms, Winterton-on-Sea has a relatively old population. Over recent years, data from the Annual Business Inquiry suggest that the number of employee jobs has declined by almost 20%. The Coastal Communities Alliance argues that regeneration cannot be reduced simply to counting jobs; but whilst it may have a point, a community cannot survive in economic terms without jobs. Winterton-on-Sea’s original economic rationale was linked strongly to fishing which has all but disappeared. For this reason, sustaining alternative and appropriate forms of economic activity to maintain employment opportunities will be important in the future.

Hemsby (and Newport)

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement form the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 6.15 Hemsby is located about 2.5km to the south of Winterton-on-Sea. It is a significantly larger settlement, with a permanent resident population of about 4,600. Functionally, Hemsby is split into two parts. Hemsby Village is located inland and is home to most of the resident population. However a sizeable part of the village is devoted exclusively to large-scale tourism. The Newport area of Hemsby (known as Hemsby Beach) includes – within the dunes area – a series of accommodation parks consisting of chalets and caravans. The North Norfolk Coast website describes Hemsby as a “lively resort” of particular appeal to those looking for “family entertainment, amusement arcades, discos and seaside gift shops”²⁸ and at

²⁸ http://norfolkcoast.co.uk/location_norfolk/vp_hemsby.htm

the peak of the summer holiday season, the population of Hemsby swells to approaching 20,000. In addition, our consultees suggested that many of the visitors who stay in Hemsby spend significant amounts of time and money in Great Yarmouth.

- 6.16 In terms of its economy, Hemsby was badly hit in 2009 by the closure of Pontin's holiday park; direct impacts included the loss of about 50 jobs. Press reports at the time explained the closure in terms of its need for "significant investment" whilst facing "declining bookings and escalating costs"²⁹. A major re-branding exercise was initiated in response, focusing on the area's Viking connections. At present, the former Pontin's site remains vacant. Within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, it is identified as a potential strategic housing site.
- 6.17 The SMP (First Review) policy relating to Hemsby/Newport is one of "no active intervention". For Hemsby's tourism industry, this is a concern. The dunes on which many of the caravans/chalets are sited are retreating and already – according to our consultees – a number of holiday properties have been lost. There was one suggestion that the rate of retreat was a factor in the decision to close the Pontin's holiday park – but this was strongly contested by other consultees who argued that the immediate physical threat to the main sites is fifty or more years away.
- 6.18 Brandon Lewis, the Member of Parliament for Great Yarmouth, recently raised the issues facing Hemsby during a debate in Parliament on Shoreline Management Plans. With regard to Hemsby, he said:

Hemsby in Great Yarmouth has £80m of tourism economy at risk from shoreline management issues... A lot of the properties there are mobile homes which are classed as temporary and therefore not counted for cost-benefit analysis. Their value runs to tens of millions of pounds, but they are simply not counted when weighed against water voles, for instance, or in our case the lifespan of terns. Terns are phenomenally interesting birds, but I struggle to see how they match up to a tourism industry of about £80m³⁰.

- 6.19 In terms of our typology, Hemsby is classified as **a small settlement in which there is a strong tension with processes of coastal erosion.**

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 6.20 In terms of the local responses, Hemsby was described by consultees as being "quiet"; this apparent reticence was explained in part by a worry that the very process of airing concerns about coastal erosion could have implications for property values and that in turn was not in the interests of local people. However there was some suggestion that the situation in Hemsby is changing. Hemsby and Caister have both been part of Great Yarmouth's participatory budgeting pilot; while focused on local services rather than coastal change issues, this has sought to enhance localised decision making (see below). Specifically on the coastal change front, the parish council has been engaging with the debate and a representative from Hemsby Parish Council chairs the newly-formed Yarmouth Coastal

²⁹ See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/norfolk/7812232.stm>

³⁰ Taken from a House of Commons debate on 30th November 2010 (see <http://www.brandonlewis.org/article.php?id=1060>)

Erosion Group. Through our consultations, the view was expressed that Hemsby simply wants a solution: the suggestion was made that “either protection or roll-back” would suffice. The fact that neither seems to be an option was a source of concern. Looking ahead, the critical issues facing Hemsby can be summarised simply – although resolving them is more difficult.

How should the economic impacts associated with tourism be factored into decisions with regard to future coastal policies – and linked to this, what should be the future of the Pontin’s site?

- 6.21 The view of Hemsby stakeholders – and apparently of the local MP – was that had the dwellings on Hemsby Beach been judged to be “permanent” rather than “temporary”, then different judgements might have been reached with regard to coastal policy (as set out in the SMP) and this would colour private sector investment decisions. This in turn was thought to be important in terms of the settlement’s medium term economic well-being. However there was also some sense that local planning policy was raising questions – if not solutions – with regard to Hemsby’s future. Specifically, whereas the 2001 Local Plan clearly regarded Hemsby as a key holiday centre within the Borough, the Amendment to the Core Strategy consultation document (from 2009) seems more equivocal. The closure of the Pontin’s site in this context however has compounded the issues and, in some respects, made them more immediate. Our understanding is that the Pontin’s site is still – in planning terms – being regarded as a prime site for holiday accommodation purposes, although as yet, little interest has been shown from the market; it is perhaps noteworthy that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment discusses it in the context of housing³¹.
- 6.22 In terms of solutions, the possibility of roll-back has certainly been aired, although neither the mechanics (in planning terms) nor the physical setting are regarded as straightforward. Consultees explained that rolling back those parts of Hemsby which are particularly at risk would almost certainly obscure the sea view, etc., on which the tourism industry in particular depends. The fact that the response locally has been to engage in significant re-branding with the aim of reviving the tourism offer suggests that there is currently no medium term solution in place. For the moment, the local economic imperative – which is very important in an area which depends significantly on tourism – is holding sway.

Caister

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement form the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 6.23 Caister is located 7km to the south of Hemsby and about 5km north of Great Yarmouth. It is a larger settlement than Hemsby, with a resident population of approaching 9,000 people. Like Hemsby, its economy is dominated by seaside tourism: a large holiday park – now owned by Haven Holidays – is situated at the northern end of the settlement. In addition, however, the Scroby Sands wind farm is located just offshore from Caister and fully in sight of it (and, indeed, of Hemsby and Great Yarmouth).

³¹ Note that Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments form an important evidence source to inform plan-making, but a SHLAA does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for housing development

- 6.24 Caister's proximity to the far larger settlement of Great Yarmouth is effectively determining coastal policy (recognising that for Caister, as Hemsby, the key immediate concern is one of coastal erosion). The SMP (First Review) acknowledges that Great Yarmouth is the major economic centre and that this "justifies full protection against erosion or flooding". It continues:

This needs to be reflected by adopting complementary policy options for the presently defended areas of California and Caister. Whilst these locations will continue to be defended for some time, if this continues into the long-term, these would become very pronounced, potentially interrupting sediment transport to Great Yarmouth and beyond, and indeed the rest of Caister itself. Therefore the longer-term plan needs to allow for some realignment of the shoreline to take place northwards from Caister Point to enable improved material movement along this coastline³²

- 6.25 In theory, the intention is that – as a "key service centre" for the Borough – Caister should see reasonable levels of development, particularly of housing. In practice, however, this is proving difficult to deliver. As the Amendment to the Core Strategy consultation document makes clear, "Caister-on-Sea is constrained by the bypass and landscape quality issues to the west, flood risk zones to the south, coastal erosion and the loss of gaps between settlements of Ormesby St Margaret and Scratby to the north". The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identifies just two possible sites within the settlement.
- 6.26 In terms of our typology, Caister was identified as **a small town in low tension with processes of coastal erosion.**

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 6.27 In many respects, the issues facing Caister appear to be similar to those facing Hemsby: there is a large tourism sector which is at some risk from processes of coastal erosion. However certainly in the short-medium term, Caister's situation is different from that of Hemsby because of its proximity to Great Yarmouth and – in coastal policy terms – the "shelter" this effectively provides.
- 6.28 For Caister (as indeed Hemsby), there has been encouragement for greater localised problem solving. For example, over recent months, a participatory budgeting pilot has been undertaken, using a combination of community cohesion and community safety funds. Both Caister and Hemsby were included within the pilot which appears to have been successful³³.

Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston)

Brief description of the setting, the position of each settlement form the typology and the apparent regeneration and adaptation issues

- 6.29 Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston) have a combined population of about 58,900 and together, they form the main urban settlement within the Borough, accounting for over 60% of the

³² Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan First Review (May 2010) – Non-Technical Summary page 10

³³ Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Participatory Budgeting Pilot – Evaluation Report, April 2010

Borough's total resident population. Socio-economic indicators suggest that this urban area is one of the most deprived in the East of England. In terms of our "coastal places", it ranks with Jaywick and Clacton as the most deprived according to IMD 2007. Based on the data provided by Steve Fothergill and colleagues to the East of England Coastal Initiative, it appears that within Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston):

- well over a third of employee jobs in the town are in sectors associated with public administration; these are likely to be extremely vulnerable in the context of public sector spending cuts, particularly given the nature of the financial settlement announced recently in respect of Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- the employment rate – amongst the working age population – is 64% as compared to a regional average of 77%
- some 23% of the working age population is claiming out-of-work benefits; this compares to 10% across the East of England
- about 34% of households in Great Yarmouth claim housing benefit and/or Council Tax benefit; the corresponding figure for the East of England is 18%.

6.30 None of these observations are new with regard to Great Yarmouth. The causes of worklessness, for example, are complex and deep-seated. One factor – referenced in the *Sub-Regional Housing Strategy for Great Yarmouth and Waveney, 2005 and beyond* – reflects the decline in the tourism industry, the lapse of hotels/guesthouses into use as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and, consequently, the in-migration of a large transient population of vulnerable people. But the causes and challenges go further and deeper: the strong seasonality of available employment is one factor and the high incidence of people with mental health problems amongst those on incapacity benefit is another³⁴.

6.31 However of particular concern is the finding that the number of employee jobs seems to have fallen between 2003/04 and 2007/08 by over 5% at a time when (a) the East of England as a whole grew (in employee job terms) by over 3% and (b) Great Yarmouth was in receipt of a raft of regeneration measures and programmes. These have included a Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, support through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and – since 2006/07 – a Borough-wide Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) programme. Over this time, the town was identified as both a Key Centre for Development and Change and a Priority Area for Regeneration within the East of England Plan.

6.32 Over this period, progress has certainly been made and – on the economic front – there is now real clarity on sectoral priorities: tourism, ports/logistics and energy. Moreover, substantial – mostly public sector – investment has followed, some of it overseen by the Urban Regeneration Company (for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft), 1st East³⁵. There has been substantial investment in a new Outer Harbour³⁶ at East Port and the intention is that the port

³⁴ Commissioning Great Yarmouth's Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Needs Analysis: Conclusions – see http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/13-Spirals_Needs_Analysis_B3_B4_C.doc

³⁵ Note that this ceased operations in March 2011 but that a new Norfolk Development Company is planned, in part as a successor body

³⁶ Public sector funding has been as follows: £8.6 million (East of England Development Agency), £4.6 million (European Regional Development Fund), £3.1 million (Norfolk County Council) will part-fund the maritime

should provide a new container terminal and deep-water facilities, primarily to service the offshore renewables sector. This includes the Scroby Sands offshore windfarm which was commissioned in 2004 and is now operational. The construction of its thirty 2-megawatt turbines was serviced from Great Yarmouth (although a study commissioned by Renewables East concluded that of total expenditure of £80 million linked to the development, construction and initial five years operation of the Scroby Sands offshore wind farm, no more than £12.8m (16%) was likely to originate within the East of England³⁷).

- 6.33 In economic terms, assumptions surrounding the renewed dynamism of Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston) form one of the central tenets of local planning strategy. The Amendment to the Core Strategy states that 60-70% of the Borough's housing requirement and no less than 80-90% of employment provision should be located in the urban areas of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston; hence the economic well-being of the main urban area is a clear priority. In explaining the preferred approach, it argues that:

The key challenge for the borough is accommodating the development needs within environmental limitations of flood risk, coastal erosion and designated nature conservation site, whilst promoting regeneration and ensuring sustainable patterns of development by improving accessibility to key services, facilities and employment opportunities³⁸.

- 6.34 At its coastline, Great Yarmouth is defended primarily by a wide beach and – so long as there is a continuing supply of sediment from north east Norfolk – the expectation is that this should be sustained. If, for some reason, that ceases to be the case, then major defence works would be required. Either way, the SMP (First Review) policy – over all three epochs – is one of “*hold the line*”. Further south, at Gorleston, the picture is more dynamic. There has been concern that Gorleston Beach has experienced accelerated erosion and that the cause of this *may* have been disruption to the offshore movement of sediment caused by developments linked to the Outer Harbour and Scroby Sands³⁹. At one stage, there was concern that parts of the sea wall had less than five years of useful life and a defence scheme was devised in response reflecting the area's high amenity value; its proximity to a high quality residential area; and the fact that the potential damage to the main sewer could be substantial. However, our consultees suggested that local people did not like the proposed reef scheme and there was opposition to it. Subsequently, the beach recovered somewhat and the scheme is now considered to be less urgent.
- 6.35 For Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston), flooding is actually a greater threat than erosion. The area is low lying and rising sea levels represent a substantial challenge. The concern is that sea levels could rise substantially over a 60-100 year timescale. This, coupled with increased groundwater pressure as a result of fluvial processes, could present a challenge to existing defences: indeed, fluvial, tidal and surface water⁴⁰ issues all effectively converge on the town. Recent surveys suggest that the defences need attention over a period of 10-20 years and the concern is that significant financial liabilities are being built up.

access works, with Great Yarmouth Borough Council providing support in kind through lease of land valued at £1.6 million (see <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/71212w0003.htm>)

³⁷ *Scroby Sands – Supply Chain Analysis* Report to Renewables East by Douglas Westwood Limited, 2005

³⁸ *Amendment to the Core Strategy, Local Development Framework, 2001-21* – Great Yarmouth Borough Council, 2009 – page 18

³⁹ See <http://www.gorlestonbeach.org.uk/index.php>

⁴⁰ A Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) is being developed

- 6.36 The challenges are all the greater because of the principal spatial focus for physical regeneration, namely waterfront locations which are largely within Flood Zone 3. For Great Yarmouth, there appear to be few alternative options; at least something akin to incremental “roll back” is not really an option, owing to the immediately adjacent Broads. More generally, the need for pragmatic compromises is recognised: Great Yarmouth Borough Council has itself asserted that “*In assessing the weight to be attached to the consideration of flooding, the Council has had also to have regard to other sustainability objectives including regeneration⁴¹*” (Amendment to Core Strategy Consultation, page 55). Within this context, the Sustainability Appraisal on the Amendment to the Core Strategy consultation found that “*the policy has an uncertain effect on the objective to reduce the Borough’s vulnerability to climate change as the URC area is within areas at risk of flooding unless the development promotes improved flood defences*”.
- 6.37 In terms of our typology, Great Yarmouth is defined as a **large town in a high level of tension with coastal flooding**.

Regeneration/adaptation responses, and critical issues arising

- 6.38 In part because of the scale of the regeneration challenge, Great Yarmouth has been a focus for a great deal of activity. Significant investments have been made, particularly over the last decade. However as intimated in paragraph 6.29, the town’s performance continues to be poor on key measures of economic well-being. Looking ahead, there would appear to be four crucial issues at the interface between adaptation and regeneration responses, none of which are easy to resolve. We discuss them briefly in the paragraphs that follow.

Levels of public sector investment which have characterised the past 10 years are unlikely to be repeatable

- 6.39 Over the last decade or so, Great Yarmouth Borough has benefited from substantial public sector investment, much of it focused on Great Yarmouth town: the Outer Harbour, the InteGreat project (focused on the urban realm), the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative, the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, and so on. Given the state of the public finances, it is unlikely that this rate of investment will continue. Indeed, a number of key interventions – like LEGI – are due to be terminated; 1st East ceased operations at the end of March 2011⁴²; and Great Yarmouth Borough Council is one of 12 nationally that will see its budget cut by almost 9% in each of the next two financial years⁴³. In paragraph 1.6, we noted CLG’s definition of regeneration as “*a set of activities that reverse economic, social and physical decline in areas where market forces will not do this without support from government*”; for the foreseeable future, it would appear that financial support from government will be seriously thin on the ground.

⁴¹ Amendment to the Core Strategy, Local Development Framework, 2001-21 – Great Yarmouth Borough Council, 2009 – page 55

⁴² Although note that the new Norfolk Development Company should – to some extent – act as a successor body

⁴³ See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11980367>

The prevailing regeneration model assumes that the development process will generate value, but development is very expensive and land values are low

- 6.40 In parallel – and prompted in large part by both the East of England Plan and the provisions of PPS3 – Great Yarmouth’s approach to regeneration has effectively been housing-led. In the context of a regionally buoyant housing market, the basic premise of the last five years has been that targets to promote the rapid growth in housing supply – coupled with the extraction of significant developer contributions through s106 agreements – could and should provide the route to new investment in all sorts of social and community infrastructure.
- 6.41 In Great Yarmouth, housing targets set out in Policy H1 of the East of England Plan are high relative to that which has been achieved over the recent past and there is limited land supply. This has meant that brownfield sites in areas at high or very high flood risk are being treated as prime development sites. Technical solutions to the problem of flood risk have been devised, but these add to the cost of the development process in an area in which land values are comparatively low.
- 6.42 In the context of an economic slump and credit crunch, there is a real question as to whether the private sector can afford to invest. Even if it can, the consequence is reduced developer contributions (through section 106 agreements) which ought to be important in financing supporting infrastructures (including affordable housing, social and community infrastructures, and so on). Hence the viability of the approach to regeneration is called into question.
- 6.43 With the intention to revoke the East of England Plan, housing targets are again potentially for discussion. Any re-assessment ought to be completed in the context of a hard look at their deliverability.

The biggest source of potential financial return is offshore but this is outside the ambit of terrestrial planning

- 6.44 More positively, within (or, at least, close to) Great Yarmouth, a new economic purpose has been defined, linked to offshore renewables. In the medium term – given government policy – this ought to be a focus for sustained jobs creation and growth. However in terms of leveraging wider benefits, there are challenges. If an offshore renewable energy facility was located on land, it would fall within the jurisdiction of local planning processes and – as a sizeable commercial venture gaining commercial value from (effectively) a “land” designation – some level of developer contribution would be negotiated to fund local supporting infrastructure. But with the offshore development on the seaward side of the mean low water mark, no mechanism currently exists to extract contributions of this nature. We can only speculate as to the difference such a mechanism might make. But for somewhere like Great Yarmouth – with Scroby Sands just offshore – the impact in terms of delivering wider regeneration imperatives could be important.

Longer term, mechanisms like roll-back would be very difficult to apply given the size of Great Yarmouth and its location

- 6.45 Finally, we can observe that – primarily because of the level of flood risk – Great Yarmouth is facing issues that may be virtually irreconcilable: many of the regeneration models are

very expensive but the regeneration need remains acute. Long term, there must be concern that existing mechanisms – such as those set out in the Supplement to PPS25 (Development and Coastal Change) – are simply not “big enough” to resolve the issues, particularly given the proximity of the internationally-designated Norfolk Broads. The Pathfinder at Scratby/California is examining the possibilities linked to roll-back; but that is in the context of a settlement with a population of well under 2,000 people, not almost 60,000. Particularly with the demise of higher level strategic planning processes (notably through the Regional Spatial Strategy route), is not clear how large scale – but still place-specific – adaptation issues will be addressed in the future.

7: The extent to which regeneration and coastal adaptation are reconciled across our case studies of “coastal places”

- 7.1 Looking across our two clusters of case studies – which relate to eight very different “coastal places” in the East of England – what immediate conclusions can we draw both in relation to the relationships charted in Figure 1-1 and, specifically, to *reconciling* regeneration and coastal adaptation? And within this context, how helpful is the typology of “coastal places” which was developed in Figure 3-1?

The nature and extent of “reconciliation”

- 7.2 Although there are clearly differences between them, taken in the round, our eight case studies of “coastal places” appear to fall broadly into three groups in terms of the extent to which they appear to be succeeding in *reconciling* regeneration and coastal adaptation imperatives.
- 7.3 Arguably **Great Yarmouth (and Gorleston)** and **Clacton** form a first group. In both cases, a long term commitment to “*hold the line*” has – at one level – obviated any immediate need for “reconciliation”; instead, a series of technical fixes has been implemented (and/or is proposed) such that regeneration strategies can proceed in a manner that is, in effect, shielded from the adaptation challenge. This is, in essence, the cycle of develop-defend-develop that has emerged in many larger coastal settlements since Victorian times. However these technical fixes are not without consequence. Perversely, they may actually be exacerbating the very problem they are trying to solve: the implementation and deliverability of regeneration strategies and solutions. The “fixes” tend to be expensive and – with public sector finance now in very short supply – interventions to address apparent market failures may be very difficult to fund.
- 7.4 This argument may well be overstated. An alternative view is that, looking ahead, there are some real opportunities: if the offshore renewables sector – for example – was to generate significant local economic growth then the balance between costs and benefits could yet shift and hence there are clearly both upside and downside risks. In this context, it is instructive to refer back to Defra’s definition of “*adaptability*” as “*the characteristics of a plan, strategy or scheme that sustain and enhance the function of a system in the face of continuing change or uncertainty*” (see paragraph 1.11).
- 7.5 A second group might be defined around **Jaywick** and **Hemsby** (and, perhaps, **Caister**⁴⁴), although again, the argument should not be taken too far: there are very important differences between these two/three sets of circumstances, not least in terms of the severity of the issues. What seems to unite this group, however, is three main observations:

⁴⁴ Caister is very difficult to situate within the three groups. Its circumstances are similar to those of Hemsby, but less acute. Functionally, its future – in terms of coastal policy as well as economic well-being – is strongly bound up with Great Yarmouth and hence there is an argument for grouping it with the larger settlement

- *first, the need for adaptation is not some remote possibility that can largely be “ignored for now”*

The relevant coastal processes are immediate and acute: they are affecting the functionality of these “coastal places” today and the policy framework developed in response is influencing the investment decisions of businesses and households alike. The immediacy of the threat also requires local communities to acknowledge that there are some very real issues that need to be faced up to and – in order to avoid potentially catastrophic impacts arising (say) from a freak weather event exacerbated by climate change – some difficult choices will have to be made. The health and safety of local residents must be of the highest priority; this may mean that alternative solutions to reduce risk will need to be given serious consideration, even if compromises have to be made.

- *second, the extent to which the local community has been constructively engaged in the process of devising adaptation responses – as part of a wider approach to regeneration – has been relatively limited*

Whilst there have been some local tensions in Jaywick, in the past, the situation in Hemsby appears to have been more one of ambivalence, coloured by a real worry that simply discussing and airing the issues will cause problems (through falling property values, and so on). Hemsby’s situation appears to have changed more recently and there is now greater engagement, but the process of building up knowledge, capacity and influence does take time.

- *third, the issues at the interface between regeneration and adaptation are genuinely complicated and there is, as yet, no clear solution that has the confidence of all parties*

For Jaywick, the challenges are linked in part to issues around the tenure of housing and national systems of housing benefits; in short, there is demand for very low cost accommodation, and Jaywick is meeting that requirement. Although there is no intrinsic reason why Jaywick should continue to be the location where this requirement is satisfied, a strong historic precedent has developed. This in turn has led to a clearly defined community identity (caused in part by the difficulties of moving elsewhere given house price differentials) and an expectation amongst members of that community that this should be the place where low cost housing continues to be provided, despite the need for coastal adaptation.

But even more fundamentally – and whether or not there is demand – the scope for new build in Jaywick is very limited because of flood risk issues in the context of PPS25. Over recent years, the development of new housing has typically defined the core of regeneration models. These are effectively unworkable in a context like Jaywick, but as yet there is no clear alternative solution.

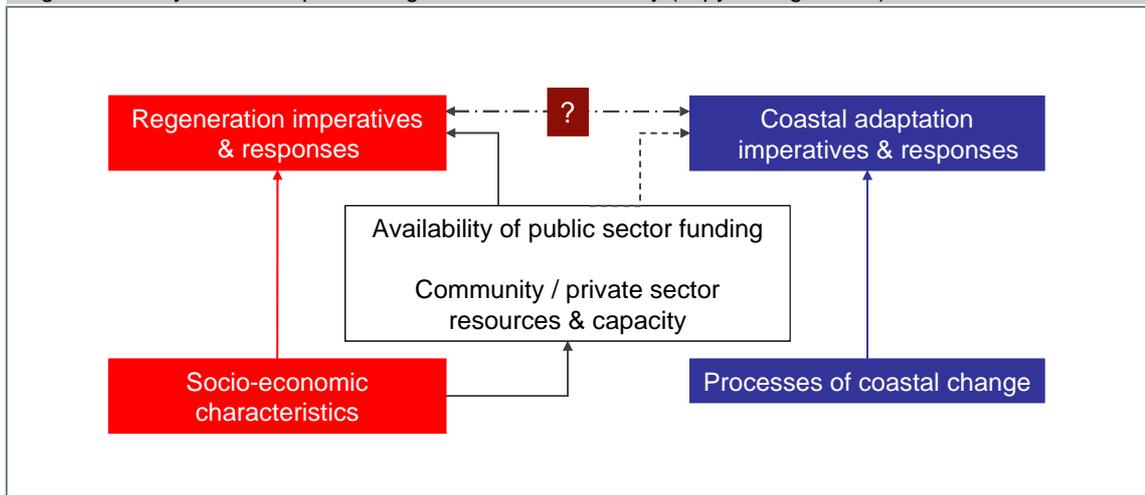
With regard to Hemsby, the issues are much less acute, but no less complex: what could/should be done to sustain a tourism sector (which is the economic mainstay) when the dunes on which caravans/chalets are located is being eroded away?

7.6 A final group of “coastal places” might, perhaps, be defined in relation to **Winterton-on-Sea**, **Brightlingsea** and **West Mersea**. Across these three settlements, we can make two overarching – and probably interdependent – observations. First, neither the regeneration imperative nor the adaptation challenge is anything like as acute as for the other settlements: there are certainly issues, but the relevant communities and stakeholders (and local authorities and agencies) can – literally – “live with them”. Second – and partly as a result – the issues and evidence have been aired locally, and informed decisions have been made. Whilst this does not imply that there are no disagreements, it does tend to mean that discussions and debates are informed and influential, and that solutions can be found.

Reflections on Figure 1-1

7.7 If these arguments are accepted, where do they leave us in relation to Figure 1-1 (reproduced below)?

Figure 7-1: Key relationships defining the focus for the study (copy of Figure 1-1)



Source: SQW

7.8 Arguably, the findings from our eight case studies suggest that in relation to regeneration and coastal adaptation, “reconciliation”:

- must be understood as an on-going dialogue between two dynamic processes; it is not some kind of static outcome or end-point
- is most likely to be achieved if there is sustained, substantive and engaged involvement from within the local community, and across the interface with statutory authorities, agencies and processes
- is far more likely to be achievable on an ongoing basis if the requirements for both coastal adaptation and regeneration are modest and incremental rather than acute and urgent.

Reflections on our typology of “coastal places” (Figure 3-1)

7.9 Finally, what conclusions should we draw with regard to the value – or otherwise – of our typology of “coastal places”?

- 7.10 In terms of “reconciliation”, the axis associated with “coastal change” was useful, although arguably, the principal insight was provided more by a judgement on the “degree of tension” than the “nature of the coastal change process”. Overall, we found consistently – at least on the basis of eight case studies – that some form of “reconciliation” was most likely to be being achieved where the underlying degree of tension with coastal processes was judged to be “low”. The implication that follows is that “reconciliation” is intrinsically more difficult when the level of tension is “high”.
- 7.11 The socio-economic axis was also helpful particularly – and simply – in terms of identifying the larger settlements. Perhaps unsurprisingly (given the content of the East of England Plan), the two large settlements we considered in detail had adopted broadly similar regeneration responses within which the delivery of significant new housing was both a strong feature and one that was distinctively different from those in the smaller towns and villages. Moreover – as the inevitable consequence of the underlying principles of SMPs – the larger settlements had a different type of relationship to processes of coastal change: “*hold the line*” was, effectively, an underlying assumption.
- 7.12 The typology was, perhaps, less useful in shedding light on “reconciliation” issues in the context of smaller settlements. In part, this was because they embrace a great variety of socio-economic circumstances. But it was also because SMP policy in relation to villages and very small towns is less predictable *ex ante*.

Part C: Reconciling regeneration and coastal adaptation: Challenges and opportunities looking ahead

8: Reconciling regeneration and coastal adaptation: Perspectives from elsewhere

- 8.1 The challenges of reconciling regeneration and coastal adaptation imperatives are confronting coastal areas across the UK and internationally. Before turning to draw out some conclusions and recommendations focused on the East of England, it is instructive to give some consideration to the lessons and insights that may be gleaned from elsewhere. In this chapter, we present a series of short illustrations.

Planning for coastal change in Lincolnshire

- 8.2 Our first example is taken from the East Midlands. It actually relates to a planning study through which options were developed for viable and sustainable community futures in the context of coastal change. The study included proposals for implementation and funding arrangements. It is cited as an example of good practice in the Practice Guide which was published alongside the Supplement to PPS25 (Development and Coastal Change).

Box 8-1: Coastal Lincolnshire Study

Lincolnshire's coastline includes some of the country's most versatile agricultural land, a significant tourism industry, and internationally important nature conservation sites. With large areas at or below sea level, the Lincolnshire coast is also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The most vulnerable stretches of the coast are currently well protected from flooding. However, future rises in sea level mean that it is necessary for decision-makers to understand the current and possible future relationship between sea level rise and coastal flooding, economic regeneration, planning and housing provision, agricultural production, tourism, social deprivation, the natural environment, transport and health.

The Lincolnshire Coastal Study Group, comprising county and district authorities, the regional Government office, East Midlands Development Agency, the former East Midlands Regional Assembly, the Internal Drainage Board, the Environment Agency and Natural England, commissioned the Coastal Lincolnshire Study to make a fresh assessment of the future needs of the coastal area and to assist in providing a longer-term perspective for planning. The study addressed coastal flooding issues and put forward a set of Principles and Options for spatial development to allow communities in the study area to develop and have a viable and prosperous future.

The study comprised five tasks:

- **Task 1:** Collation of an economic, environmental and social baseline and the development of a sustainability appraisal framework
- **Task 2:** Mapping of flood hazard scenarios and development of socio-economic scenarios for the study area
- **Task 3:** Development of draft Principles and Options through workshops with selected stakeholders
- **Task 4:** Testing of the draft Principles and Options against the sustainability criteria, and refinement of the Principles
- **Task 5:** Collation of information on potential delivery mechanisms.

The agreed primary principle was to increase the safety of people by reducing the number of people at risk of flood hazard in the study area. Three specific principles were developed, summarised below:

- **Principle 1:** Guide development by the level of flood hazard (e.g. placing restrictions on the type and nature of development according to the level and severity of flood risk)
- **Principle 2:** Reduce over time the consequence of flooding for people in all flood hazard zones by, for example, installation of flood resilience measures, improving emergency planning/response measures, development of buildings and infrastructure for use in emergencies
- **Principle 3:** Through development decisions, aim to improve social, economic and environmental conditions in existing and new communities, with a particular focus on more deprived areas, by, for example, minimising the loss of high quality agricultural land, diversifying tourism, improving green infrastructure, protecting and enhancing water infrastructure, protecting natural, cultural and historic assets, improving transport infrastructure and services, and improving the quality of existing housing stock and access to jobs, training and services for local people.

A range of delivery mechanisms were identified. Perhaps the most significant was restrictions placed on development according to flood risk, with major housing development constrained in particular outside of defined flood hazard zones, plus the implementation of resilience and emergency planning measures appropriate to the particular hazard zone and type of development. Other delivery mechanisms centred around reducing risk through education, occupancy criteria, grant funding to raise preparedness, buy and rent back schemes, and improving socio-economic conditions, for example, by harnessing developer contributions, lobbying national government for increased regeneration funding, etc.

The Lincolnshire Coastal study, which was originally commissioned to inform the review of the East Midlands Plan, is now being used as an important part of the evidence base in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks, and in making decisions on planning proposals at the local level.

Sources:

- Lincolnshire County Council summary of the Lincolnshire Coastal Study (10 November 2010) www.lincolnshire.gov.uk
- Atkins (14 May 2010) Lincolnshire Coastal Study. Summary Report
- Taking Forward the Lincolnshire Coastal Study (August 2010) A joint statement by Lincolnshire County Council, Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council, South Holland District Council, Environment Agency, Natural England.

Addressing coastal flood risk on the Baltic Coast

- 8.3 Box 8-2 provides an example from Germany of an attempt to develop an acceptable solution to an emerging threat of coastal flood risk. In essence, the local community was opposed to the proposed technical solution because of its perceived “ugliness” and the knock-on effects for the tourism sector (on which many local people relied for their livelihoods). Through a participatory process, alternative acceptable solutions were eventually devised. The starting point for this was one of education and information such that local people could understand fully the nature of the risk they were facing.

Box 8-2: Public participation in integrated flood risk management – A case study from the Baltic

Timmendorfer Strand and Scharbeutz are two coastal holiday resorts located on the Baltic Sea coast of Germany. With about 1.3 million overnight stays per year, the local economy depends strongly on tourist activities. At the same time, almost 6,000 people live in coastal flood-prone areas. These are at risk from extreme storm surges.

The main flood defence is the natural beach-ridge with heights of about 2.5 to 4.0 m above mean sea level (MSL). With rising sea levels, there is real doubt as to whether existing defences could withstand a storm surge event. The last major event was in 1872 but sea levels are now higher (and vulnerabilities correspondingly greater) and the area is far more heavily populated.

The authorities responsible for coastal defence have long been aware of the problems and have proposed various solutions including the construction of a new dyke. However – because of the threat to the tourism sector on which the local economy largely depends – the municipalities and the local population have resisted its construction.

To try and overcome this deadlock situation, in 1999, municipalities and coastal defence authorities agreed upon a new and participative procedure to develop an integrated flood defence solution. This involved the use of a sensitivity model which was built up around a number of variables (including the level of employment, the quality of tourism services and the available municipal budget) which were discussed, agreed and to some extent populated through public meetings. Once the basic model had been constructed, sensitivity analyses were conducted to test the impact of different coastal defence strategies; these included “no coastal defences”; “the construction of a dyke”; and a number of hybrid solutions.

The process of developing the model and testing its sensitivity led to increased awareness of the issues amongst representatives of the local population and a preferred solution was developed. As yet, however, this remains to be implemented because of a lack of funding.

Sources:

- *Timmendorfer Strand / Scharbeutz: Public participation in integrated flood risk management* – authored by Aude Korfer and Jacobus Hofstede and published by CoPraNet (Interreg IIIC)
- *Integrated Coastal Zone Management: Participation practices in Europe* – edited by Alan Pickaver, Rob Steijn, Maria Ferreira, Patrycja Czerniak and Erik Devilee and sponsored by OurCoast, a three-year initiative commissioned by the Directorate-General Environment of the European Commission.

Engaging coastal communities in the West of Scotland in major offshore developments linked to renewable energy

- 8.4 Our third case study is taken from the West of Scotland. For three coastal communities facing major and deep-seated regeneration challenges, it charts emerging responses to the prospect of very significant offshore development. The planned investment is of a scale that could transform local economic prospects. However the potential threat in relation to the fabric of local communities is also recognised. In order to try and navigate these competing issues, funding from a local LEADER programme was drawn down to enable local communities to develop their own socio-economic assessment and, subsequently, to engage in an informed manner in debates relating to the wider development process.

Box 8-3: Ensuring the best possible outcomes for local communities with regeneration needs from the development of large, offshore windfarms – A case study from the West of Scotland

In March 2009, the Crown Estate announced plans for several large-scale offshore wind farms in Scottish Territorial Waters. Specifically, three project sites were identified off the Argyll coast at Kintyre (378MW), Islay (680MW), and Tiree (1500MW).

The proposed wind farms were (and are) extremely large scale projects, capable of generating over one quarter of Scotland's peak electricity needs and involving total investment estimated at £7-9 billion. Their construction and operation should generate potential opportunities for local businesses, job creation and investment in local services and infrastructure. However, there could also be some significant challenges, notably in relation to the sustainability and fabric of the local communities.

The three host communities – Tiree, Islay and Kintyre – are all predominantly rural. All three are facing socio-economic challenges currently:

- Tiree and Islay have been classified as “fragile areas” by Highlands and Islands Enterprise; they are characterised by a history of population loss, low incomes, limited employment opportunities, poor infrastructure and remoteness. Their island economies are reliant on agriculture, fishing and tourism, and local businesses tend to be small.
- Kintyre is a peninsula. Its main settlement, Campeltown, is identified by Highlands and Islands Enterprise as an “area of employment deficit”. Rural Kintyre is similar in character to Tiree and Islay.

Hence for all three areas, there are significant regeneration imperatives. The opportunities and threats linked to the construction and operation of the offshore wind farms need to be understood against this backdrop.

Within this context, the Argyll Renewables Communities (ARC) Consortium was formed from three local Trusts. Its purpose is to identify the ways in which the three local communities can become active participants in the development and operation of offshore wind and marine energy projects. In turn, the ARC Consortium's thinking is that this should ensure the best possible outcomes for communities, as well as for all stakeholders.

In launching this process, ARC Consortium members recognise fully the potential of the offshore projects to enhance the long term socioeconomic sustainability of the three host communities. Comparisons have been made with the Shetland Islands and the exploitation of North Sea oil. However, it is also acknowledged that there are significant risks and that project activities could impact negatively on the local socio-economic fabric and cultural heritage. Moreover, with the proposed Argyll projects, the opportunities and risks for the respective communities are magnified compared with those on the mainland, because of their status and identities as islands (the Kintyre peninsula exhibits similar characteristics to the islands).

Drawing on support from a wide range of sources (including the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Programme, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and ScottishPower Renewables), the ARC Consortium is working with the three local communities in order:

- to build a far wider understanding of the potential impacts of the development and operational activities associated with these wind farms
- to identify how to maximise positive benefits and minimise negative outcomes.

In the first instance, the vehicle for this process of engagement is a community-led socio-economic impact assessment (SIA) study. The intention is that this should enable local communities to develop their own opinions from a position of knowledge, and to allow them to participate on an informed basis in discussions with stakeholders, especially the developers, the consenting authorities – Argyll and Bute Council and the Scottish Government – and the Crown Estate. It will also give local communities the confidence that their voice is being heard, that they are fully involved in the development process and that well-balanced judgments can be reached.

Based on information from the ARC Consortium's website (<http://islayenergytrust.wordpress.com/argyll-renewable-communities-consortium/>); a scoping report on the first phase of the socio-economic impact assessment (<http://islayenergytrust.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/arc-sia-scoping-study-final-without-annexes.pdf>); and a press release announcing the second phase of the study (<http://islayenergytrust.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/arc-press-release-sia-funding-300610.pdf>)

Note that the proposed developed at Kintyre was not included in the Scottish Government's Final Plan for Offshore Wind in Territorial Waters (March 2011)

Local community engagement as a route to coastal adaptation in Australia

- 8.5 Our fourth example comes from the Australian state of Victoria. It derives from the lowest tier of government in Australia; the nearest English equivalent is probably a lower tier district council. In the context of climate change within a coastal setting, its premise is one of providing information to the local population and through this, instigating a progressive and gradual process of adaptation. Two observations can be made in relation to it. First, it appears to be extremely wide-ranging, encompassing social/community, economic and environmental concerns. Second – and compared to many of the English equivalents – it appears to be very direct/stark in the language that is used and the messages that are conveyed. In what is a widely available booklet, the scale of the risk is quantified, communities at risk are named, and the proposed solutions could appear quite provocative: in an English setting, it is sobering to consider how many coastal local authorities which depend significantly on coastal tourism would be bold enough to commit publicly to “*help support the development of a new non-coastal tourism sector*” (thereby, presumably, displacing some of their own existing businesses).

Box 8-4: Mornington Peninsula Shire Council – A Case Study from Australia

Located within the Australian state of Victoria, the Mornington Peninsula is just over an hour's drive from the city of Melbourne. It is a 720 square kilometre promontory separating two bays: Port Phillip and Western Port. The Peninsula contains a diversity of scenic landscapes and is almost surrounded by the sea, with coastal boundaries of over 190 kilometres, a total of approximately 10% of Victoria's coastline. It is a mixture of urban areas, resort towns, tourist development and rural land. The Shire has a population of more than 140,000 people, increasing to more than 200,000 during the peak summer period.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is one of 79 local government councils in the state of Victoria. The Shire is part of the local government structure and is the third tier of Australia's democracy, alongside State and Federal Parliaments. [In terms of English benchmarks, its population is similar in scale to that covered by South Cambridgeshire District Council and the extent of its territory is actually somewhat smaller].

The Shire Council has instigated a series of “Climate Change Conversations”. These have been identified nationally as an example of a successful community engagement strategy (see *Developing a National Coastal Adaptation Agenda: A report on the National Climate Change Forum*, published by the Australian Government's Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, February 2010).

The extract below is taken from a booklet produced by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council called “*Climate Change: What we are doing about it*”

Rising sea level

Rising sea level could result in damage or loss of beaches, coastal wetlands and foreshore reserves and their amenities.

Potential impacts

- about 640 residential and 30 commercial properties could be affected
- due to low resolution of topographic level data, people and properties exposed to inundation may be understated, especially along Port Phillip Bay coastline
- damage or loss of beaches, coastal wetlands and foreshore reserves and their amenities
- potential to affect roads, foreshore and boating facilities, drainage
- impacts on businesses dependent on beach-related tourism
- low income households and elderly households vulnerable
- communities at risk: Hastings, Stony Point, Crib Point, Shoreham, Balnarring Beach, Balcombe Creek area, Safety Beach, Rosebud West.

What we are doing about it

Coastal Management Plans

- development of a long-term vision and protection of foreshore reserves, environmental, heritage and recreational values

- assessment of coastal access
- planting of vegetation to help prevent erosion
- planning for areas prone to erosion and stabilisation works.

Boating and coastal action plans

- long-term planning for safe boating and harbours.

Planning Schemes

- zoning and development laws re: coastal areas.

Supporting local industries

- strategies to help support development of new non-coastal tourism sector
- implementing Vic1000 program to educate and encourage business to reduce waste and energy consumption
- maintaining business networks that build climate change awareness and the consequences of potential impacts.

Building standards

- develop engineering/building standards for buildings and infrastructure near coastal areas.

Storm water and flood water

- minimise the range and load of pollutants delivered from stormwater/flood water run off to receiving environments such as the sea
- artificial wetlands to 'filter' stormwater/floodwater before it reaches the sea
- waterway re-vegetation to minimise erosion.

Working with state government

- The Shire is working with the state government's *Future Coasts* project, carrying out detailed laser level imaging and digital modelling along the Victorian coastline to develop a high resolution 3D representation of the land, 10 metres above and 10 metres below sea level. The project will increase our understanding of how climate change will impact on the coastline around Western Port and Port Phillip bays. The information will be used for future planning, preparation and erosion management control.

9: Reconciling regeneration and coastal adaptation: Key messages for the future

Introduction

- 9.1 The process of reconciling the combined imperatives for regeneration and coastal adaptation is complex and on-going. This study has been a relatively small scale examination of what is an immensely complicated set of circumstances. In concluding it, we are aware that the £11m Coastal Change Pathfinder programme sponsored by Defra is due to end shortly and that it ought to generate in-depth insights into the challenges of coastal adaptation but also practical solutions (including with regard to funding and compensation). It also ought to make some reference – on a broad definition akin to that developed by the Coastal Communities Alliance – to regeneration. The diagram overleaf summarises the issues being examined by the 15 Coastal Change Pathfinders nationally.
- 9.2 In drawing our study to a close, we make four brief sets of comments in the hope of setting some kind of agenda for further consideration. These derive from the work we have completed (although some of these issues are being examined in considerably more detail through the various Coastal Change Pathfinders), and our wider reflections in relation to it. We also seek to draw out the key messages and implications.
- 9.3 Alongside these comments, we would however make one overarching observation. The title of this study was *reconciling* regeneration and coastal adaptation. *Reconciling* these two processes in a manner that is both affordable and sustainable certainly ought to be the goal. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that regeneration and coastal adaptation simply may not always be “reconcilable”, certainly not *in situ*. In some circumstances, there may be irreconcilable tensions in which trade-offs, compromises and choices ultimately have to be made. Where this is the case, it is better to acknowledge and plan for them now, rather than waiting for the situation to be forced upon communities, perhaps by a catastrophic storm event.

Table 9-1: What the Coastal Change Pathfinders are doing

		North Norfolk	Waveney	East Riding	Scarborough	Great Yarmouth	Sefton	Dorset	Somerset	Chichester	Tendring	East Sussex	Hampshire	South Hams	Lincolnshire	Hastings
Community engagement	Involving community in adaptation planning		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
	Capacity building/education	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Building partnerships		✓				✓		✓							
	Capturing community history of coastal change	✓														✓
Adaptation planning through...	Free standing plan		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
	Spatial planning	✓	✓	✓				✓								
	ICZM [Integrated Coastal Zone Management]			✓			✓			✓						
	Regeneration plan										✓					
Delivering adaptive solutions	Enabling continued access to changing coastal environments	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓		✓			
	Transitional support for at risk properties/businesses (incl. buy to let)	✓	✓	✓											✓	
	Supporting 'roll-back' of at risk properties	✓	✓	✓	✓											

Coastal erosion	Coastal erosion/flooding	Coastal flooding/inundation	Accretion
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Source: Taken from a presentation given by Paul Barrett, Defra, to a conference on Coastal Planning and Adaptation which was held at the Centre for Life, Newcastle on 19th March 2010. Note though that consultees considered that the "Waveney column" ought also to have ticks for both "ICZM" and "Regeneration plan"

External “solutions” may look like “quick fixes”, but creating the scope for genuine local ownership/influence is important in relation to them...

- 9.4 Our work has suggested that external imperatives and “imposed solutions” *may* jar badly with the aspirations of local communities. This potential disconnect has emerged in a number of different contexts.

The power – and potential – of international environmental designations

- 9.5 Within the East of England, it is possible – although not inevitable – that otherwise-realistic attempts to *reconcile* regeneration and coastal adaptation imperatives could ultimately be over-ridden by the legal requirement to safeguard designated habitats⁴⁵ and landscapes. With rising sea levels and a generally low-lying coastline, a number of landscapes and habitats are at risk (e.g. the Broads). Ultimately, these will need to be safeguarded (although this may prove to be challenging in its own right in some locations where irreversible environmental influences brought about by climate change come into play). The consequence could be that locally negotiated solutions are challenged.
- 9.6 To some extent, these issues can at least be anticipated. Moreover, these high quality environments ought to be recognised as a resource and positively embraced in these terms. Could they be considered as an attractor for business (e.g. home-based micro-businesses that are relatively footloose, and where “quality of life” is an important consideration in deciding where to locate)? And is there, in practice, the opportunity for some coastal settlements to look more towards the inland amenity than that at the coast – as appears to be the situation in the adaptation example from the Australian state of Victoria (see Box 8-4).

Investment in offshore waters

- 9.7 Another potential “external solution” arises from investment in offshore waters, through – for example – the development of offshore wind farms. In principle, these ought to be a catalyst for economic renewal. However whilst the scope for economic renewal is apparent, local communities might not always welcome it unambiguously. Our case study from the West of Scotland identified some of the surrounding issues; these are equally relevant in the East of England and elsewhere as new Rounds of wind farms are built out.

The “interconnectedness” of the process and the need for a “whole system” response

- 9.8 More generally, in attempting to reconcile imperatives for regeneration and coastal adaptation, there is a need to recognise the multiple layers of interdependency. This is, we suspect, all the more important at the start of an era which is intended to be one of radical localism in which the “big society” holds sway. As we have seen through our case studies,

⁴⁵ It should be noted, however, that under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, there is provision for the integrity of internationally designated nature conservation sites to be negatively impacted upon by a plan or project where there are no alternative solutions, and where the plan or project must be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (such as reasons relating to human health and public safety)

communities – particularly when there are acute socio-economic needs – can make choices that appear perverse when the vantage point is one of long term alignment but wholly rational when the immediate imperative is simply for somewhere to live. For households on very low incomes, the structure of housing benefits, for example, has a huge bearing on the choices that are made. In seeking to reconcile issues of coastal adaptation and regeneration, factors of this nature need to be taken into account fully.

- 9.9 In similar vein, it is essential that regeneration and adaptation imperatives are considered together. The beaches and salt marshes that characterise the East of England coast are not only attractive to local people, visitors, retirees, and lifestyle businesses, they also form part of the solution. While there may well be a need to protect some communities with hard defences, adaptation solutions that work with the environment – such as the creation of new salt marshes – offer alternative approaches. Not only do these contribute to the landscape and biodiversity, but they also act as buffers to extreme events.

Implications

In light of these issues, it is apparent that integrated solutions are needed in coastal settings, taking full account of environmental, social and economic issues. Crucially, building a strong level of engagement within coastal communities is important even where external “solutions” – whether economic or environmental – emerge.

There is a need for regeneration models based on “renewal from within”...

The need for an alternative to housing-led models of regeneration in areas of coastal change

- 9.10 Within many of the East of England’s larger coastal settlements, there is a need to identify alternatives to housing-led models of regeneration and growth. Particularly in deprived coastal communities in which underlying rates of economic growth are sluggish, the model itself appears to be under real pressure: development costs are high, demand is relatively low and in this context, the routes for extracting value are less than clear. In some cases, these issues are exacerbated by the “exception test” within PPS25; this might be paraphrased in terms of “*development is not really appropriate (for intrinsic reasons of flood risk), but in order to avoid more immediate problems, it will be permitted*”. In terms of investor confidence, the use of the “exception test” could be self-defeating, yet it has featured in some of the coastal settlements in which the need for investment to effect economic (and social) regeneration is most acute.
- 9.11 But more generally, these “low demand” settings have more parallels with the housing market renewal areas in the north of England than the buoyant economies elsewhere in the East of England. In this context, economic revival is essential. In many respects, this argument is largely separate from – but additional to – the adaptation imperative.
- 9.12 For any local area, there are only three possible routes to economic growth: the formation of new, local, businesses; the growth of existing ones; and inward investment. The larger coastal settlements have some opportunities across all three domains, but they do also need to

be realistic. In terms of inward investment, there may be real opportunities linked to offshore renewable energy. However catalysts to economic activity from within the resident working age population must also be a priority: currently there are doggedly high levels of worklessness in many of the coastal settlements. The causes, typically, have both demand- and supply-side components, some of them inter-generational, and they are difficult to address; in this context, the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative have been important recent ventures. In the future, it may be that interventions of this nature – focusing on the process of local employment and enterprise – should be afforded a higher level of priority than the big capital investments and physical regeneration programmes of the recent past; given the state of the public coffers, the latter may, in any case, be unaffordable.

Defining viable economic roles for “coastal places”

- 9.13 Related to the need for new regeneration models, there must be a recognition of the paramount importance of defining – and if necessary creating – distinctive economic roles for “coastal places” that are viable in a 21st century context. There are some encouraging signs. The offshore renewable energy sector offers genuine potential; “coastal places” have an intrinsic comparative advantage in supporting its growth; and much-needed private sector investment is already taking place. However this is only one sector and given the extent of coastal economic malaise, there is a need for more.
- 9.14 Tourism and leisure will – and should – continue to play an important role: it is a growth sector nationally (and globally) and the (re-)definition of the tourism product – perhaps through a stronger engagement with the designated landscapes (see above) – ought to be a priority. At the same time, however, there is a need to recognise, and manage, some of the risks. Tourism tends to generate predominantly low paid and seasonal employment and in some respects, those issues sit at the core of the coastal economic challenge.
- 9.15 Looking ahead, one issue which is often seen as a “coastal problem” could, perhaps, be repositioned as an economic opportunity. We have seen that many coastal settlements have a distinctive demographic structure, characterised by a high incidence of older people. It is also clear – as recent press coverage has emphasised⁴⁶ – that population ageing is a national phenomenon, not simply a coastal one. Positively positioning coastal settlements in relation to older people may not be a popular suggestion, but it is worth considering. At any rate, it *may* be one option in terms of defining an economically viable role/purpose for some coastal settlements.
- 9.16 Ultimately, economic viability is a fundamental lynchpin of sustainable regeneration. In the future, the question of viable economic roles for coastal places should be one with which the emerging Local Enterprise Partnerships (specifically those for Norfolk and Suffolk, and for Greater Essex-Kent-East Sussex) engage as a matter of priority.

⁴⁶ “Nearly one in five UK citizens to survive beyond 100” see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12091758>

Implications

Coastal communities must be clear on their own economic role and purpose and environmental assets and processes can play into this. It is important that local businesses have the confidence to invest. This has implications at a variety of spatial scales. For emerging Local Enterprise Partnerships, there is a need to encourage locally stimulated responses: could there, perhaps, be one or more coastal Enterprise Zones? More locally, is there scope for initiatives akin to the “Totnes Pound” which would allow more of the benefits of local economic activity to be retained locally? And can adaptation be the catalyst for more environmentally-led economic activity through the creation of new environmental assets?

Working with and through the planning system is very important...

Changes to the planning system

- 9.17 The Supplement to PPS25 (Development and Coastal Change) was published by CLG in March 2010. Broadly, it set out two key mechanisms through which the planning system could facilitate coastal adaptation in an orderly and managed way:
- through *Policy DCC2*, it required that the relevant Regional Strategy should identify areas where communities impacted by coastal change may need to be relocated; and – in the context of coastal change – areas in which growth should be avoided
 - through *Policy DCC3*, it required local planning authorities to identify Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) and then (a) to identify the nature of appropriate development within CCMAs but also (b) to make appropriate provision where development and infrastructure needed to be relocated (through roll-back).
- 9.18 In combination, these two policies ought to have provided a planning framework through which there was the wherewithal and scope to address coastal adaptation and regeneration imperatives simultaneously.
- 9.19 The publication of the Localism Bill in December 2010 heralded some potentially fundamental changes to the planning system. First, provision was made for Regional Strategies (previously Regional Spatial Strategies, and including the East of England Plan) to be revoked. In their absence, it is difficult to envisage a mechanism through which something akin to Policy DCC2 might now be implemented. While national planning policy statements are to be retained and local planning authorities will have a “duty to co-operate”, there will be no top-down requirement or catalyst for action specifically in a regeneration/coastal adaptation setting. Although the Lincolnshire Coastal Study (see Box 8-1) is now being used to guide LDF processes, we can only speculate as to whether it would have ever been instigated in the absence of the requirements of the East Midlands Regional Strategy.
- 9.20 Second, through neighbourhood planning, the intention is that communities should shape local areas; specifically, if local people vote in favour of neighbourhood plans in local referenda, councils will have to adopt them. The Bill also brings important changes to the

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), including the requirement that a proportion of funds should be passed to the neighbourhoods in which the development has taken place.

- 9.21 In relation to processes of coastal adaptation, the provisions of the Localism Bill are double-edged. In theory, coastal communities could take it upon themselves to designate something like a Coastal Change Management Area and make provision for roll-back, thereby bypassing elements of lengthy LDF processes. On the other hand – particularly if the local community is not well informed of the underlying coastal change issues and/or is profoundly concerned about the implications – it is possible to envisage neighbourhood plans that jar fundamentally with the need for meaningful adaptation.
- 9.22 The planning reforms present some opportunities, but also some real challenges. At a local level, the latter may be surmountable, but only if local communities – and local planning authorities – are properly informed and resourced. Given simultaneous cuts in local authority budgets, this could, again, prove challenging. At the strategic (sub-national) level, the demise of the Regional Strategy will, we suspect, leave a real – and complicated – gap. Some consideration will need to be given to how this might be addressed: simply ignoring the problem is unlikely to be helpful in reconciling the imperatives of regeneration and coastal change.
- 9.23 Hence in terms of the impact of the planning reforms, we can only speculate at this juncture. Our suspicion is that the reformed planning system may provide a flexible, accountable and responsive tool in situations where the challenges of adaptation and regeneration are incremental (rather than acute) and where the local community is well-informed and engaged. Where the issues are significantly bigger in scale and/or the need for action genuinely is urgent and/or there is little real clarity on what (if any) solutions might actually work, the new system could struggle.

Marine planning

- 9.24 Alongside changes to terrestrial planning, it is important also to be cognisant of the revolution that is underway with regard to marine planning. Although much of the detail remains to be developed, this should result in a more managed interface between the marine and terrestrial environments and in seeking to reconcile coastal regeneration and adaptation, it ought to provide more opportunities for holistic solutions (although it is unlikely to result in simplification).

The inherent challenge of planning in the context of uncertainty

- 9.25 Over and above changes to marine and terrestrial planning, one of the overarching themes throughout this study has been the challenges of planning in the context of real uncertainty. One view that has been aired is that SMPs may be premature in proposing a specific policy for 100 years' hence when there is so much uncertainty in terms both of (a) how the coastline actually will evolve; and (b) the technical solutions that may become available over the years ahead. This view is an extreme one and it is important to note (a) that SMPs are reviewed regularly and (b) SMP timescales do force at least some consideration of very difficult, long term, issues. Nevertheless as the MP for Great Yarmouth argued in a parliamentary debate,

When we look at the shoreline management plans we look at issues over the next 50 or 100 years. The previous MP for Suffolk Coastal made the point—it has stuck with me because it is very relevant—that the companies and commercial bodies and some of the private individuals affected, particularly regarding tourism, need to see that they can protect the coastline and make an investment that gives them a business plan of 20 to 30 years.

However, we do not really need anything too much beyond that time scale. If we think about what is possible now—compared with what was possible and what we knew 20 years ago; and in some cases, five or 10 years ago—we realise that, once we get beyond the next 20 to 30 years, we are putting our fingers in the wind and guessing how technology and our understanding will change. Therefore, to be honest, the 100-year plans become somewhat redundant⁴⁷

- 9.26 But there is another important angle on SMPs and uncertainty. We have referred already to resource constraints in the context of attempts to effect regeneration: the big public sector capital investments of the last decade (like the University of Essex campus at Southend, the Outer Harbour at Great Yarmouth, Orbis Energy in Lowestoft, and University Campus Suffolk in Ipswich) are very unlikely to be repeated. However, it is important to acknowledge that the majority of SMP policy statements – even those relating to the early epochs – are also currently unfunded. Hence a policy of “*hold the line*” signals “intent” but it brings with it no guarantee of financial support (despite the often positive cost-benefit ratios identified). Austerity with regard to public sector spending is just as much a concern for coastal defences as it is for regeneration projects, and the level of uncertainty ought to be recognised more explicitly. Of course there is a real risk that serious questions regarding the deliverability of “*hold the line*” will raise even more doubts in the minds of would-be investors, particularly given the implications for insurance premiums and the like⁴⁸.

Implications

Planning processes are complex, but there are some potentially helpful tools within the planning system. Putting these to work effectively in coastal communities requires a high level of community engagement and commitment. It also needs creative and sustained responses from local planning authorities, and strong political leadership.

Coastal communities have a critical role in shaping their future...

- 9.27 Coastal communities need to recognise that change is not an option: sooner or later, it is inevitable. In the East of England, many coastal communities have a high incidence of older people, a good proportion of whom have moved to the coast on retirement. While it is important to avoid stereotypes and caricatures, the fact remains that in many cases, the prospect of change is very unwelcome locally. Equally, in some coastal communities, there is acute deprivation and income levels are very low; in some circumstances, a level of financial

⁴⁷ Taken from a House of Commons debate on 30th November 2010 (see <http://www.brandonlewis.org/article.php?id=1060>)

⁴⁸ In this context, it is also important to acknowledge that a policy of “*no active intervention*” is not a “no cost” solution. Instead, the costs are transferred to households, communities and businesses (see Rob Young’s article *Coastal planning – plus ça change!* Published in *Town & country Planning*, October 2009)

viability has been achieved because living costs are also low (primarily because the housing stock is poor) but all of this severely limits options in formulating responses to coastal change and effecting regeneration.

The importance of informed community dialogue and engagement

- 9.28 Whatever the situation, coastal communities need to be encouraged to engage positively so as to shape the debate about how change will happen. This study has demonstrated the great importance – but also the challenge – of securing an informed dialogue both *within* coastal communities, and *between* those communities and the various layers and guises of “authority”. Across our case studies, we found a range of different circumstances. Generally speaking, an informed and consensual dialogue was most likely to occur where the challenges of adaptation and regeneration were not especially acute. Beyond this, the process of dialogue appeared to work best in circumstances characterised by:
- the provision and dissemination of information in a digestible and consistent form
 - the early engagement of coastal communities
 - the presence of one or more “local champions” who – usually on a voluntary basis – have sought to animate the debate locally in dialogue with (or as a member of) the relevant parish council.
- 9.29 We found examples of communities not wanting to engage, mainly – it seemed – because of fears surrounding potential property blight. Sometimes this resulted from a lack of understanding and more generally, there is a need to continue to make efforts to explain, for example, exactly what information within (in particular) the relevant Shoreline Management Plan really means. Specifically in the SMP context, a clearer separation between “understanding coastal processes” and “formulating solutions” might be helpful with regard to community engagement.
- 9.30 *Reconciling* regeneration and coastal adaptation requires, as a minimum, an informed and on-going dialogue. This in turn needs to be resourced, both from within the community and in relation to “authority”. In this context, the observation was made that some local authorities – notably North Norfolk District Council (which was considered to be exemplary) – had invested substantially in building the capacity and knowledge to engage effectively; elsewhere, the interface between coastal adaptation and regeneration was seen as much less of a priority (partly because there were other pressing issues competing for attention) and the capacity to engage effectively was also more limited. In these circumstances, some coastal district councils in particular were thought to be significantly (and increasingly) under-resourced.
- 9.31 In this context, it is sobering to reflect on the international examples referenced in Chapter 8. Processes of reconciliation appeared to be underway in both the Australian and German examples, but in both cases, they seemed to rely on substantial and sustained engagement with local communities, all of which needs to be resourced. Conversely, in the West of Scotland, the EU LEADER Programme appeared to be playing a key role. In all cases, careful education and awareness raising of both local residents and businesses is needed in

relation to the challenges posed by coastal change, but without raising unnecessary fear. The aim should be to foster a sense of community ownership over the challenges so as to enable communities to understand that they can help to be part of the solution. Against a backdrop of spending cuts and job losses in local government (and government agencies), sustaining this process of engagement is not going to be easy.

- 9.32 Whatever the circumstances, informed and sustained community engagement is essential if appropriate, and locally acceptable, choices are to be made. And there are examples of communities making fundamentally difficult but successful decisions. Where this is happening, the common strand appears to be informed engagement over a period of time with the community itself coming to some kind of view on the best way of managing risks and subsequently defining a new vision.

Implications

There is no blueprint for coastal communities in seeking to effect regeneration whilst adapting to coastal change. Solutions must be negotiated and developed locally, based on informed judgements in relation to risk. In this context, processes of community engagement must be sustained: the communities themselves are critical in terms of effecting some level of reconciliation, but sustained and informed engagement needs resourcing.

Annex A: Note on Coastal Change Pathfinder Projects in the East of England

- A.1 Four Defra-funded Coastal Change Pathfinder projects in the East of England are very relevant to this study. The projects are part of 15 across England awarded a national total of £11 million in early 2010, with completion planned for spring 2011. Each project is concerned with examining *how coastal communities can best adapt over time to the consequences of coastal erosion and change*. They include both plan development and practical work – although investment in hard sea defences is excluded. The East of England’s projects are: North Norfolk, Waveney, Tendring and Scratby (which is located between Hemsby and Caister on the coast of Great Yarmouth Borough).
- A.2 Based on a review of relevant websites, we provide a synopsis of the region’s four Coastal Change Pathfinder projects in the paragraphs that follow.

North Norfolk

- A.3 North Norfolk District Council has been awarded £3,000,000 to explore planning for and managing adaptation to coastal change. A range of projects and locations are involved, with a particular focus on the community of Happisburgh. The Happisburgh projects include the purchase and demolition of properties at risk in the short term (Epoch 1 of the SMP), with owners relocated, and the purchase and potential lease-back of properties at risk in the medium term. Not surprisingly negotiations are proving to be difficult. The owners affected by the removal/relocation of their properties in the short term are seeking a payment equivalent to a full ‘no risk’ valuation, but this is contrary to central government policy and practice. Other Happisburgh projects include removing beach debris, recording the community’s heritage and a programme of cliff-top enhancements, involving the relocation of the car park and public conveniences and the provision of an attractive wide ‘buffer zone’ and new beach access.
- A.4 Projects elsewhere in the district include improvements to the beach environment and pedestrian access at Beeston Regis, involving the removal of beach debris such as failed hard sea defences; the realignment of part of the Marrams cliff top footpath at Cromer – which has been closed due to cliff instability - and the re-provision of the outdated village hall at Trimingham, which is otherwise likely to be lost to erosion within 20 to 30 years. A project at Salthouse is concerned with replacing a visitors’ car park which is already being overwhelmed by shingle, following the decision to stop maintenance of the shingle banks at Cley and Salthouse.
- A.5 Another project is concerned with the coastline between Wolferton Creek and south Hunstanton and is being managed by Kings Lynn & West Norfolk District Council. This is exploring the practicalities of drawing in private contributions to help pay for necessary coastal flood defences. Around 3,000 holiday caravans and chalets are located between the sea bank and a shingle ridge and there is a relatively high flood risk (1 in 50 years) if no further hard defences are provided. The cost of implementing the SMP’s preferred “*hold the line*” policy through to 2015 is estimated to be £45 million – and £12 million investment is

required by 2025. This equates to £430 per unit of holiday accommodation per year. The project has appointed consultants to evaluate options for businesses and private individuals to contribute to the upkeep of flood defences.

Waveney

- A.6 Waveney District Council has been awarded £1,534,555 in relation to two projects involving Corten Village and the isolated hamlet of Easton Bavents, communities identified as facing challenging adaptation issues. As well as supporting these locations, the project will help build capacity both locally and with the Suffolk Coast Futures partnership.
- A.7 The beaches to the north and south of Corton village have poor access and are currently of low amenity value because there are large amounts of redundant coastal defences. The first component of the project is to develop a ‘beach strategy’ and implement works to bring the beaches up to blue flag standard. This will be of economic benefit, helping to make the village’s caravan and holiday parks attractive to visitors. The second component relates to responding to the significant coastal erosion anticipated in the centre of the village in the SMP’s medium term ‘Epoch 2’ (i.e. after 20 years). This is likely to result in the loss of a significant number of businesses and homes. The project will draw up a community-based plan for the long-term development of the village, including ‘roll-back’ of properties most at risk. This will pay particular attention to supporting businesses in the area, so as to ensure the village’s long-term viability.
- A.8 Easton Bavents is considered to be the most ‘at risk’ settlement on the Suffolk coast in erosion terms. The project involves working with residents to plan for the re-location of the community to an alternative site. A range of issues are involved – including developing planning policy.

Tendring

- A.9 Tendring District Council has received £1,000,000 to explore a range of issues relating to the entire Tendring Peninsula, stretching from Harwich in the north to the Colne estuary in the south, together with more detailed work with both Jaywick and Walton-on-the-Naze communities. The funding is split 15% revenue and 85% capital. A strategic plan is being developed for the whole coastal frontage. Community engagement is a critical issue, building local understanding of coastal change and embedding this in regeneration programmes. A contribution to the regeneration programme is proposed in Jaywick by acquiring and demolishing derelict properties in areas ‘at risk’ of coastal erosion. A community development worker is employed to engage with local residents on regeneration plans.
- A.10 The Naze Protection Society has formed a partnership with Tendring District Council (TDC) and Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) to see the creation of Crag Walk at Walton. Crag Walk is a 100-metre rock revetment in front of the cliffs adjacent to the Naze Tower. It will form a viewing platform which will include interpretation to educate visitors on the impact of coastal erosion, as well as providing a safe walkway from which the public can view the famous geological structure of the SSSI cliffs. TDC are responsible for the design of Crag Walk, the management of its construction and subsequent maintenance. EWT will work towards

improving and managing key conservation habitats and visitor infrastructure on site. The viewing platform will become a visitor attraction in its own right and will enable visitors and schools to see and understand how erosion is affecting the coast.

Scratby/California (Great Yarmouth)

- A.11 Great Yarmouth Borough Council has been awarded £296,000 for this one year project in Scratby/California, just south of Hemsby and north of Caister.
- A.12 Until 2005 the SMP policy for Scratby was to “*hold the line*” for the foreseeable future. The SMP (First Review) has a policy of “*no active intervention*” and it is anticipated that the coastline will erode naturally, depending on tides and weather. This is expected to lead to the loss of significant numbers of properties, other facilities and infrastructure over the period 2025 to 2105. The ‘coastal pathfinder’ projects all involve a study of how people living and working along the coast can adapt their lifestyles to the consequences of coastline change and anticipated retreat. There is strong community involvement in the Scratby project which is looking at a range of options for practical responses. Residents have formed the Scratby Coastal Erosion Group (SCEG) and they are lobbying national government and agencies responsible for coastal defence. The key objective is to persuade government that an existing rock berm along the base of the cliffs at California (to the south) should be extended north for a kilometre to protect the base of the cliff and marrams (dunes) at Scratby.

The project’s aims are listed as:

- the development of a Coastal Area Action Plan, in line with the proposed Development and Coastal Change Policy
 - the examination and testing of equity release and equity transfer schemes and opportunities, such as purchase/rent-back, property exchange programmes and business support programmes
 - the exploration of land use ‘rollback’ options and infrastructure implications
 - the identification of sources of external and commercial funding that may be accessed to support adaptation programmes
 - a programme of community education and information to engage, inform, reassure and support communities and individuals in coming to terms with coastal change.
- A.13 A wide range of agencies is involved, including the local authorities, water, sewerage and electricity suppliers. Both residents living on the cliff line and those further away are taking part. All local residents have been informed of the study and invited to take part. A community survey and interviews were undertaken by Norfolk Rural Community Council, identifying people’s views, their fears and aspirations for the future. A second study, providing an analysis of property and business issues, is also to be carried out in Scratby and California. This will focus particularly on realising and enhancing the value of assets, including land and property. A third study is exploring options for the future use of land. This will set out aspirations for new development based on the community’s views of how the locality should evolve.

- A.14 As a first step a ‘coastal change management area’ will be identified which will be the subject of potential ‘rollback’ policies and initiatives as erosion progresses. Using the SMP, this will identify the land and property which may be subject to relocation and retention policies as appropriate.

Annex B: List of Consultees

B.1 We have talked to the following individuals in the course of this study. We would like to acknowledge the time they have taken to contribute and the inputs – and insights – they have provided.

- Hilary Rowlands, Jaywick Regeneration Officer, Essex County Council
- Beverley McLean, Colchester Borough Council
- Sarah Slade, Senior Planner, Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- John Hemsworth, Scratby/California Coastal Pathfinder
- John Jones, Norfolk County Council
- Peter Wright, Economic Development Manager, Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Laurence Brooks, Hemsby Parish Council
- Terry Byrne, Chair of the Winterton Coastal Erosion Team
- Jack Bensly, Hemsby Parish Council
- Bernard Harris, Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Rob Gregory, Great Yarmouth Borough Council (email exchange)
- Brian Heron, Caister Parish Council.