

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Report to: **The Cabinet**
02 February 2010

Wards:

All wards

East Riding of Yorkshire Coastal Change Pathfinder

Report of the Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration

A. Executive Summary

The Council has secured £1.2 million as part of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Coastal Change Pathfinder. The Pathfinder is part of the consultation on the draft Coastal Change Policy, to test innovative approaches to helping coastal communities to adapt to coastal change.

The Cabinet (15 September 2009 Minute 3704) resolved:

‘that the Council applies to become a Coastal Change Pathfinder in order to pilot methods for helping communities successfully adapt to coastal change.’

Pathfinders will explore ways in which the fund can be used to better engage and support communities as they attempt to adjust to the impacts of coastal change, enabling them to design and deliver local bespoke solutions. It is anticipated that the lessons learned from the Pathfinders, and the good practice they generate, will be shared and reviewed to inform development of future policy and guidance. The Pathfinders will last until March 2011 and it is unlikely that funding will continue once Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are in place.

The announcement was made with funds transferred on 10 December 2009. It is crucial that coastal communities and residents living close to the edge of eroding cliff lines are able to promptly take advantage of this one-off Coastal Change and Pathfinder funding to achieve safer and more sustainable living conditions.

B. Corporate Priorities 2008-2011

Safer communities
Valuing our environment
Local problem solving
Revitalising our communities
Retaining the East Riding character
Supporting vulnerable people

A Well Managed Authority

C. Portfolio

Policy Performance and Strategic Partnerships
Cultural Services, Housing and Public Protection

D. Recommendation and Reason for Recommendation

That The Cabinet approves the contents of this report in delivering the Coastal Change Policy and the Pathfinder, and the following recommendations:

1. To approve the integration of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach to the assessment of grant applications
2. To approve delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Performance and Strategic Partnerships to assess grant applications
3. To approve the package of measures and approach outlined in this report in delivering the Government's Coastal Change Policy and the Pathfinder as detailed in Appendix B, under the direction of the Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration.
4. That delegated authority is given to the Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Performance and Strategic Partnerships to make minor amendments to the package of measures and approach outlined in this report

The reason for these recommendations is to implement a suite of measures to support residents to adapt to coastal change, and achieve safer and more sustainable conditions for coastal communities.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has secured £1.2 million as part of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Coastal Change Pathfinder. The Pathfinder is part of the consultation on the draft Coastal Change Policy, to test innovative approaches to helping coastal communities to adapt to coastal change.

The Cabinet (15 September 2009 Minute 3704) resolved:

‘that the Council applies to become a Coastal Change Pathfinder in order to pilot methods for helping communities successfully adapt to coastal change.’

- 1.2 The application was based on developing and testing innovative approaches to assist vulnerable and isolated groups in adapting to the pressures caused by coastal change to achieve a level of wellbeing and quality of life. This will build on existing adaptation best practice, both from the East Riding, (including rollback) and nationally.
- 1.3 The Coastal Change Policy and Pathfinder is pertinent to the East Riding as the Holderness coastline has a well-recorded history of rapid cliff erosion, driven by coastal processes and exacerbated by the effects of storm conditions. Records suggest that, since the end of the last ice age, cliffs have eroded at a fairly constant rate of between 1.5 to 2.0 metres per year, resulting in the loss of at least 30 villages since the Roman period. Although monitoring and historic records suggest a relatively constant rate of erosion, cliffs tend to suffer periods of rapid erosion followed by periods of relative calm.
- 1.4 The draft Policy proposed ways in which coastal communities might adapt to the impacts of coastal change, and what the Government's role in supporting this might be. This forms part of a wider programme intended to support communities facing increased risks from both flooding and coastal erosion to safely adapt. The key components of the draft Policy are:-

- The proposal of a national coastal change fund of up to £11 million to support community adaptation to coastal change;
- A proposed approach to enabling local authorities to provide practical assistance to local homeowners experiencing complete loss of a home as a result of coastal erosion through a Coastal Erosion Assistance Package;
- The presentation of issues relating to the management of coastal change for regeneration, local buildings and properties, business, community and local infrastructure, and the natural and historic environment in coastal communities;
- The presentation of draft guidance for Community Adaptation Planning and Engagement, to help coastal communities plan for and manage adaptation to coastal change; and
- An invitation for bids from local authorities interested in becoming Coastal Change Pathfinders to pilot the fund, through active engagement with their communities.

1.5 Pathfinders will explore ways in which the fund can be used to better engage and support communities as they attempt to adjust to the impacts of coastal change, enabling them to design and deliver local bespoke solutions. It is anticipated that the lessons learned from the Pathfinders, and the good practice they generate, will be shared and reviewed to inform development of future policy and guidance. The Pathfinders will last until March 2011 and it is unlikely that funding will continue once Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are in place.

1.6 The announcement was made with funds transferred on 10 December 2009. It is crucial that coastal communities and residents living close to the edge of eroding cliff lines are able to promptly take advantage of this one-off Pathfinder funding to achieve safer and more sustainable conditions for coastal communities.

2. Key Objectives of the East Riding Coastal Change Pathfinder

2.1 It is important to recognise that the aim of the Pathfinder is to provide support and guidance to those groups and isolated individuals who have been identified as being most vulnerable. The Pathfinder does not seek to provide compensation for loss, but rather provide assistance to those who are seeking to adapt to the impacts of coastal change. The reason that these residents have been identified as requiring additional support to that already available is that there is a real risk to life if they continue to live close to the cliff edge. Appendix A provides an overview of the proposed process for delivering the East Riding Coastal Pathfinder.

2.2 It is also expected that the Pathfinder should pilot a 'buy and lease' back option for residents whose properties not at imminent risk but are within or close to the 2025 erosion line as identified by the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). Subject to a condition survey and other considerations, the Pathfinder would allow the Council to purchase a property and lease it back to the owner. This would also provide the owner with capital to move to a more sustainable location once the property was deemed unsafe to live in. This approach has been championed by the Environment Agency Chairman Lord Smith, and who claims it is:

'...a small, modest proposal but really significant to those people with houses at serious risk.'

Vulnerable Groups Priority Outcome

2.3 It will be necessary to pro-actively identify and engage with vulnerable and isolated groups and individuals who may be more prone to isolation and distress as a result of living in an exposed coastal location. These vulnerable people are likely to require more direct and specific support because they have complex and wide-ranging needs.

- 2.4 Identification of these people will require close cross directorate and service cooperation and working. Those at risk will be identified initially from the erosion data produced by the SMP. This will be reviewed and verified using the Council's coastal erosion monitoring data through the ERYC coastal erosion working group. This recently established group has representation from Coastal Officers, Housing, Planning and Building Control and experience of vulnerable coastal communities. In addition to identifying the most vulnerable, this process also facilitates emergency / contingency planning approaches to be adopted, if required.
- 2.5 Site visits are in hand to liaise with residents living close to the cliff edge, which will inform the development of personal Pathfinder plans, once details of residents' situation and need have been confirmed. A single point of contact will be provided for residents.

Enhanced Assistance Package

- 2.6 The Enhanced Assistance Package, is in line with the Government's national Coastal Change Policy, but widens its scope to allow the Council to take a local and proactive approach to those at risk and identified as vulnerable through the Vulnerable Groups Priority Outcome process described above. It has been designed to help those at both imminent and higher risk, with properties located within the 2025 erosion line as identified by the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). The SMP has provided projections for coastal erosion over three epochs; present to 2025, 2025 to 2055 and 2055 to 2105. The SMP provides the scientific modelling, evidence and baseline data for the Pathfinder.
- 2.7 Based on the criteria and assessment detailed in Appendix B, it will be established whether a permanent dwelling is at Level 1 'Imminent Risk' or Level 2 'Higher Risk'. The SMP erosion line projections and the Council's erosion monitoring have been used to develop the most appropriate assessment criteria. Depending on the level of risk assessed, a personal Pathfinder plan will be produced, which details the level of assistance available from either the relocation package available at level 1, or the adaptation package available at level 2.
- 2.8 An adaptation package for a third lower level of risk may be considered for those with a dwelling between the 2025 and 2055 erosion lines, who are anticipating future risk. However, this would be subject to a review of the initial stages of the Pathfinder and the uptake of funding from Levels 1 and 2 detailed in this report. It is proposed that the review process would engage elected Members through the involvement of the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and should revisions be required to the Pathfinder these could be made to the scheme, subject to The Cabinet's approval.

Vulnerable Groups Adaptation

- 2.9 The Enhanced Assistance Package provides a suite of measures to help the most vulnerable groups and isolated individuals at risk from coastal erosion to adapt. Residents' eligibility for each component of the package would be dependant on the liaison and assessment shown in Appendix B, taking place between Council officers and the resident. At Level 1 it is proposed that for those residents of permanent dwellings at imminent risk, the following Relocation Package is available, where appropriate.

- A** Demolition and site restoration costs of the residential curtilage
- B** Relocation costs
- C** Small hardship payment
- D** Payment of up to 50% of up to a 12 month private tenancy including bond, unless covered by Housing Benefit
- E** Payment of management / agent fees
- F** Provide essential second-hand furnishings and white goods for new dwelling through support from the third sector

2.10 At Level 2, it is proposed that for those residents of permanent dwellings at higher risk, the following Adaptation Package is available:

G Buy and lease back option as detailed in Appendix B, less costs such as renovation, fees and liabilities and other considerations.

H Erosion Adaptation Assistance Grants, to provide financial assistance where residents feel that they are able to adapt their living environment, rather than move out of the property immediately. Retrospective applications for adaptation measures already carried out may also be considered

OR,

A-E Alternatively, at Level 2 a resident could be assessed for eligibility for components A to E of the relocation package should they wish to opt for their property to be demolished etc.

2.11 In addition it is proposed that a limited fund is made available for those wishing to carry out coastal inundation resilience measures.

2.12 Decisions on applications will be made by the Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Performance and Strategic Partnerships. As part of the decision making process a process of consultation will also be developed to take place with a panel of relevant stakeholders. It may be necessary for some applications that are now urgent to be decided prior to the panel of stakeholders being established.

3. Partnership Working and Policy Review and Development

3.1 A strong partnership approach is required to support the delivery of the Pathfinder and the future integration of the outcomes from this into a sustainable approach to coastal adaptation in the East Riding. It is proposed that the Pathfinder is delivered through the East Riding ICZM structures and that the ICZM management group would drive this forward.

3.2 The Pathfinder will incorporate a review of the East Riding rollback policies and consider how business properties (e.g. tourism infrastructure) can be incorporated into the suite of rollback policies and be integrated into a single multi-faceted policy, which could be considered for inclusion in the LDF. The main constraint with 'rollback' linking into the Pathfinder is the length of time required to locate and purchase a suitable plot, and construct new dwellings or premises given that the Pathfinder funding ends in March 2011. Therefore, 'rollback' initiatives not already planned and started are unlikely to feature in this round of Pathfinder funding.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The numbers of those eligible for assistance has been based on the best available data and the erosion projections produced by the SMP2. The following projections of cost have been made using this data:

Pathfinder Element	Estimated Cost until March 2011
Level 1 – Imminent Risk	£400,000
Level 2 – Higher Risk	£550,000
Support Costs and fees	£75,000
Small grants and special projects	£175,000
TOTAL	£1,200,000
Note: No additional funding is available, programmes and packages will end when funding is fully expended.	

4.2 Close monitoring of the Pathfinder will reveal progress made and allow for changes in approach, subject to future appropriate approvals.

5. Emergency measures

5.1 Due to the potential for danger to human life presented by coastal erosion risk, it may be necessary to deploy interim measures to support those who are at most risk as an emergency measure.

5.2 To support this, it will be necessary to collate initial data and carry out preliminary engagement with residents to establish the level of risk and need being experienced. Further consideration will need to be given to consider funding the removal of structures at abandoned sites, where appropriate, or for public safety reasons, where owners cannot be traced.

6. Legacy

6.1 Given the time-limited nature of Government funding for the Pathfinder, the Council will continue to lobby for these and other approaches to be enshrined in a longer-term package of support that can be mainstreamed, which will help coastal communities to achieve safer and more sustainable living conditions.

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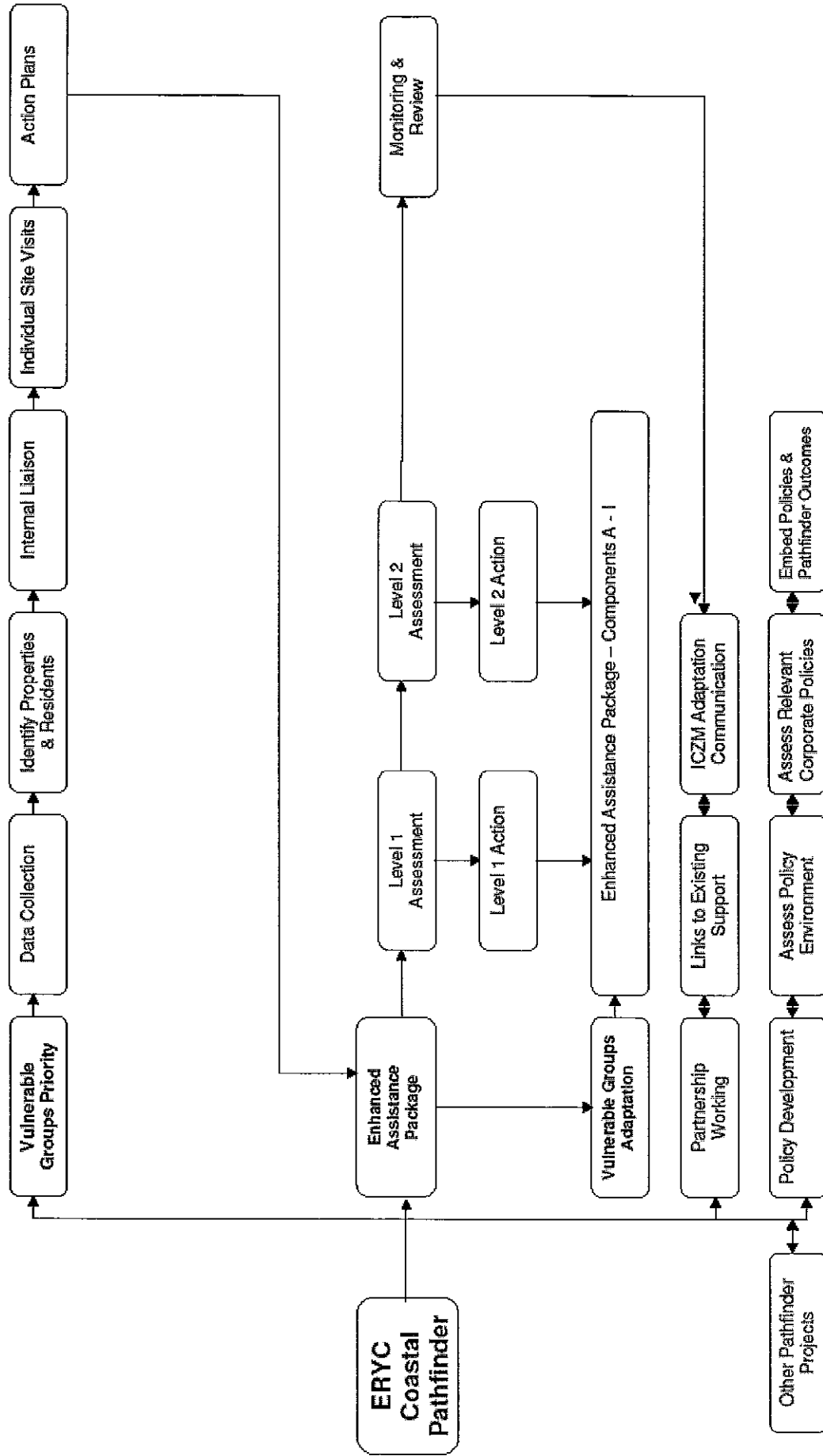
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Background Papers

Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2009) **Consultation on Coastal Change Policy**, HMSO, London.

Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2009) **Guidance for Community Adaptation Planning and Engagement (CAPE) on the Coast (Working Draft)**, HMSO, London.

Appendix A - Coastal Pathfinder Process Overview



Appendix B - Enhanced Assistance Package Process

