BACTON TO WALCOTT SANDSCAPING SCHEME



OUR COASTLINE

North Norfolk has a vibrant tourist economy which features a popular and sandy coastline. The district, which plays an essential role in the UK energy industry, boasts towns and villages of various sizes and with varied characteristics.

For many thousands of years this coastline has been subject to beach and cliff erosion.

In more recent times the coast has been protected with timber, rock and concrete sea defences.

THE CHALLENGES

As the coastline changes, we are faced with complicated decisions about how and where to defend.

Economics, communities, the environment and physical geography all play a part in these decisions.

Full 'hard' defences along the entire coast are not an option because they are not affordable or sustainable and can make erosion worse.

Bacton Gas Terminal, which processes about one third of the UK's gas, urgently needs to be protected against coastal erosion. The Shoreline Management Plan, which sets out how the coast is to be managed, states that protection of the terminal is only acceptable if it does not increase erosion at the neighbouring villages of Bacton and Walcott. The defences at Bacton and Walcott are extremely exposed to the North Sea as the beach that forms part of the defence has eroded. An acceptable 'hard' defence option for the terminal or the villages has not been identified. This has led to the development of a solution called 'Sandscaping'.













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WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

The Sandscaping scheme has been designed to benefit the communities of Bacton and Walcott as well as the Bacton Gas Terminal.

Sandscaping will involve placing between 1.5 and 1.8 million cubic metres of sand on the beach to protect the terminal (1 million cubic metres) and the villages (0.5 - 0.8 million cubic metres).

This improved beach is designed to provide robust protection to the terminal for approximately 20 years, while extending the life of the village defences.

This is a first in the UK for this type of scheme, although a similar, much larger, scheme called the Sandmotor, has been successful in The Netherlands since it was built in 2011.

BENEFITS

The sandscaping scheme is designed to protect the coastline and improve the condition of the beaches for years to come. This protection will provide time for the communities to adapt and longer term approaches to coastal management to be considered.

Beaches will still change during storm events, but with more sediment available locally they will be more able to respond and to recover under the right conditions.

It is expected that there will be additional benefits for tourism, recreation and improved beach access.

HOW IT WILL WORK

The beach plays an important role of absorbing the energy from the sea before it reaches the cliff and defences whilst also providing support to the defence foundations.



Representatives from the Bacton Gas Terminal, North Norfolk District Council and partner organisations marking the launch of the Sandscaping project at Walcott in September 2017.

The proposed larger beach will absorb more energy and support the defences. Detailed studies have been made to assess how coastal processes along this dynamic stretch of coast will work with the scheme and provide confidence that the scheme will perform.

Over time the bulk of sediment protecting the terminal is expected to feed the beaches in front of Bacton, Walcott and beyond, sustaining the initial sand placement in front of those villages.

Experience with the Dutch Sandmotor shows that in the 12 months following construction, the shape of the sediment placements will change and this is to be expected. With a new 'dry beach' above mean high water, there is a risk of windblown sand, particularly in the first 18 months. This will need to be monitored and managed.

FINANCING

Estimated scheme costs are between £17 million and £22 million.

The protection of the terminal (approximately £12.2m) will be funded by the Bacton Terminal Operators.

Government funds in excess of £3m are being made available via the Environment Agency to help protect the villages.

North Norfolk District Council will contribute £0.5m.

A range of other contributions are listed on the NNDC website, including contributions from the villages.

The Bacton Terminal Operators have also been the main contributor to the development and design of the scheme.

TIMELINE

Consent for the scheme will be sought over the summer/autumn 2018. This includes assessments to understand any impact on the environment.

The scheme is scheduled for implementation in Spring 2019.

It is expected that the construction work could take three to four months.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/ sandscaping









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