

## **8. Update from Local Choice meeting held on 22 September (EFCC17/13)**

- 8.1 The Chairman highlighted the discussion around how we can re-energise parts of the programme and bring forward shovel ready schemes because there will be money at the end of this period which other colleagues have not managed to spend.
- 8.2 The sub group meeting concluded it was for Environment Agency officers to go back to local authorities to get ideas and schemes.
- 8.3 The sub group discussed the long-standing RFCC policy that 10% of the levy in each year should not be pre allocated by the Environment Agency but remain for the Committee to allocate to in year projects and priorities. The view at the sub group was that this was policy was still appropriate and should be maintained. The Chairman reminded Members that the sub group cannot make decisions and asked for any comments on this proposal. He advised that in the past the unallocated levy had been primarily used for post surge maintenance repairs and Essex County Council have also put forward in year schemes.
- 8.4 Mr Camamile and Mr Smith both supported the proposal to maintain existing policy with regards to Levy, which was agreed by the Committee.

### **8.5 Resolution**

**The Committee noted changes in the RFCC programme and decided to maintain existing policy on use of Levy**

## **9. Local Levy, General Drainage Charge and IDB Precept for 2018/19 (EFCC17/14)**

- 9.1 This item was deferred to a later meeting

## **10. Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) policy change for Corton and Hopton (EFCC17/15)**

- 10.1 Mr Parker advised that SMPs identify the intention of management for each section of the coastline of England and Wales at a strategic level. They are broken down into short, medium and long term periods and the policy approaches are Hold the Line, Managed Realignment or No Active Intervention. SMPs are fundamental for how the coastline is managed but are not set in stone. The original process was lengthy and extensive and there is now a need to refresh SMPs. There are a series of triggers to change an SMP, one of which is if new evidence comes forward which necessitates a review. There is an approval process which includes engagement with the community, submission to the Cabinet of the Local Planning Authority, endorsement by the RFCC and then approval by the Environment Agency Area Director. This ensures a rigorous approval system for any changes made.
- 10.2 Members noted that appendix 2 of the paper showed the Policy Unit Map for Gorleston to Lowestoft. A review of this strategy was undertaken and areas 6.20, Hopton, and 6.22, Corton, were identified. They are currently Hold the line in the short term and Managed Realignment in the future predicated on no additional government money. Since then we have gone through partnership funding and this has changed the perspective about how we can fund schemes. At Hopton a major scheme has been invested in by a local business who have committed to maintain that in future. Having a Managed Realignment future policy gives them doubt, hence the request to change to Hold the Line.
- 10.3 Area 6.22 at Corton is a cliffed area which has had defences of different sorts in front of it. Leisure organisations have committed to maintaining their defences in that area. This

is a major economic driver for Corton village and they are looking for confidence to continue to maintain defences into the future.

- 10.4 Both Cabinets at Waveney District Council and the Environment Committee at Great Yarmouth have supported this and are the key drivers.
- 10.5 The Chairman reminded Members that the Committee is only empowered to endorse the proposal and it is for the Environment Agency Area Director to approve.
- 10.6 Cllr Patience asked if any approach has been made to the company who has caravans on the Denes. Mr Parker said they have spoken to all the businesses and he was confident the right conversations have been held but this is predicated there will not be a lot of public money coming along. Cllr Patience said that area has been allocated money from lottery funding so needs to be protected from flooding.
- 10.7 Mr Camamile supported the recommendation to endorse changes in the SMP and assumed in doing so the problem would not be pushed further around the coast. Mr Parker said the whole purpose of the conversation with the coastal process experts was that this would not happen because it was looked at as an integral area.
- 10.8 Mr Smith fully supported Mr Parker. He had attended a national meeting of coastal chairs and representatives in July where there was a discussion on SMPs. There was no appetite for a full review of SMPs but it was proposed there should be a light touch review. Mr Smith said as circumstances change we should expedite an update of frontages.
- 10.9 Dr Beardall asked if this change equates to a light touch review. Officers advised that a conclusion to the discussion in July will come out at a further meeting in November and Dr Beardall will be advised of the outcome.
- 10.10 Mrs FitchTillett reported that she visited this section of the coast about 15 months ago and it seemed logical and sensible to endorse the changes that Mr Parker and Mr Smith proposed. She echoed Mr Camamile's concern that it would not have an effect further down the coastline as it is crucial to the caravan park. Mrs Fitch Tillett noted that there may have been some unanticipated impacts on of the coast after the construction of the Great Yarmouth Outer Harbour.
- 10.11 The Committee agreed to endorse the paper.
- 10.12 Professor Underwood arrived after the SMP discussion but wished to express some reservations about making the change from Managed Realignment to Hold the Line. He referred to the original plans and felt this was an opportunity for the RFCC to be brave and look towards working with nature, as promoted at the Suffolk Coastal Forum. Difficult decisions were made in the original SMP and if promontories develop they will be unsustainable. There is no change in the underpinning science and we know that sooner or later these places will fall into the sea. Professor Underwood was happy if private money from those on the frontage is used to Hold the Line but asked why there was a need to change the SMP. He questioned whether a shorter term decision was being made because people's properties are at risk when in the long term this cannot be sustained and a holistic decision must be made. It seems to be contrary to the general direction. If the policy is Hold the Line GiA will have to come back into play.
- 10.13 The Chairman observed that many SMP policy decisions the first time around had been influenced by practicalities, such as the funding that was likely to be available at that point in time, as much as anything else. Obviously, if circumstances or the evidence changes, that may require a review of those earlier decisions.

- 10.14 Mr Parker referred Professor Underwood to the Policy Unit map on page 37 of the pack. The original SMP policy identified there was no further money. The conversation through the strategy being developed has been with the business who want to invest but will not if there is no confidence the area will be invested in. If their position changes the SMP can be reviewed again.
- 10.15 The Chairman asked if the business investing would be precluded from applying for tax relief if the SMP was not changed. Mr Parker said to trigger that only £1 of GiA would be needed.
- 10.16 Mr Parker reported that in Policy Unit 6.21 there is no need to change the policy. We are managing the coast and get significant investment. In 6.20 the investment made by Bourne Leisure was against SMP policy but Great Yarmouth Borough Council took the decision that they wanted to protect those businesses. Mr Parker reiterated that it will not negatively impact on the rest of the coastline. It is about giving confidence to the businesses.
- 10.17 Professor Underwood said he understood Mr Parker's point of view.
- 10.18 Mr Smith said clearly all the issues about managing a soft coast are a difficult problem. Felixstowe, Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Cromer will not fall in to the sea but in between areas are difficult.
- 10.19 Cllr Jowers was in favour of endorsing the change. He raised the question whether it is accepted that the original SMP was perfect. He did not think it was and felt there should be a possibility to review it.
- 10.20 Mr Parker advised that 6.20 and 6.22 are managed by the local authority but have been through the Environment Agency's Large Project Review Group (LPRG) and their checks and balances. He viewed it as the right approach for the RFCC to evolve SMPs as they are living documents.
- 10.21 Professor Underwood said one of the benefits of being an appointee is he can make a challenge. He is happy with the decision but given the reassurance from Mr Parker that no adverse downdrift impacts were expected. He did highlight that such a conclusion might not always be possible.

10.22 **Resolution**

**The Committee agreed to endorse the change of SMP6 policy from Managed Realignment in the second and third epochs (medium to long term) to Hold the Line for the following policy units:**

**Hopton Policy Unit 6.20**

**Corton Policy Unit 6.22**

**11. RFCC Working Arrangements (EFCC17/16)**

- 11.1 The Chairman reported that there have been a number of changes in ways of working in the Committee and this paper consolidates the working arrangement decisions made by the Committee since inception in its current form in 2011.
- 11.2 Mr Smith asked if there will be an opportunity for Members to get involved with the data visualisation tool. The Chairman anticipated it will be kept within the Committee for the next 12 months. It is not currently hosted and the initial costs are more than the product