

PHASE III OF THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF REGIONAL COASTAL MONITORING PROGRAMMES (2021-2027)

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Cabinet approve:-

- (a) the continued integration of the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme into the National Network of Regional Monitoring Programmes;
- (b) that NFDC continue to act as the Lead Coordinating Authority in the development and management of Phase III of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes; and
- (c) that NFDC continue to act as the Lead Authority in the application to the Environment Agency for funding of Phase III of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. This report is to inform and seek agreement on proposals for the delivery and development of the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme element of Phase III of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes. This programme is a regional partnership initiative, which is being lead and coordinated by New Forest District Council (through the Channel Coastal Observatory).

2.2. The existing Defra grant aid funding for the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme, which has been in operation since 2002/03, continues until March 2021.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1. Coastal risk management is now conducted over broad areas, controlled by coastal processes rather than simple administrative boundaries. This necessitates partnership working by adjoining local authorities.

3.2. Coastal risk management requires high quality and long term data sets to inform effective decision making in a complex environment.

3.3. The current approach to coastal monitoring throughout England is now well organised and structured nationally, both within individual Coastal Groups and on a regional basis. The current series of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes, managed through a series of Lead Authorities on behalf of the Coastal Groups, provides a regionally co-ordinated and integrated approach to coastal monitoring, to maximise use of data and to provide best value.

3.4. The existing Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme has been promoted, developed and implemented through NFDC.

3.5. A regional centre of excellence has been developed, through the formation of the Channel Coastal Observatory in 2002. The specialist team provides

national- and regional-scale technical support for the programme, under the technical direction of Dr Charlie Thompson, and is based at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton. The team trains and provides a sustainable supply of specialist scientific and engineering staff that is able to service the requirements of all programme partners.

3.6. The Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme is recognised as an example of international best practice by maritime coastal authorities, consultants and the Environment Agency in the UK and wider.

3.7. Following discussions, between representatives of the Coastal Groups and the Environment Agency, NFDC have been asked to continue to coordinate and develop the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes, based on their specialist experience.

4. NATIONAL PROGRAMME AIMS AND STRUCTURE

4.1. The aims of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes are to:

- Drive efficiency in flood and coastal erosion risk management through a robust evidence based approach to decision making.
- Develop nationally consistent guidance on the specification, management and delivery of coastal data and the development of monitoring programmes.
- Develop an integrated National Network of Regional Monitoring Programmes that:
 - use a consistent, repeatable, risk based and cost effective methods of monitoring the coastal environment.
 - optimise available funding to deliver both strategic and operational requirements
 - provide a sound evidence base for shoreline management plans, strategies and schemes to optimise beach management investment decisions, identify risk areas and hazards
 - provide integration of regional data sets to inform national coastal and marine management and planning initiatives
 - develop collaboration between operating authorities, and with other government-funded organisations, and a sustainable skills base at local, regional and national scales.
- Establish a clear economic assessment of the benefits of monitoring and performance review criteria for future assessment of benefits
- Produce nationally consistent performance review criteria for assessment of monitoring programme benefits

4.2. The National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes is structured to target regional variations in coastal risk and management needs, based around the Coastal Group Network, It integrates the following existing regional monitoring programmes:

- Northeast
- East Riding of Yorkshire
- Anglian
- Southeast
- Southwest

- Northwest

- 4.3. All partner monitoring programmes have made the necessary commitment to the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes.
- 4.4. Programme management will require the specialist services of the Channel Coastal Observatory, together with additional resources to manage the national programme.
- 4.5. All costs associated with programme delivery will be provided through dedicated programme budgets and 100% grant aid.

5. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ROLE - NATIONALLY

- 5.1. NFDC will continue to lead and coordinate programme development, implementation and delivery of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes with input from the partner authorities.
- 5.2. NFDC will not have any involvement with the tender process to be followed by the other Regional Programme Lead Authorities, other than technical quality scoring assessments.
- 5.3. The regional centre of excellence (Channel Coastal Observatory) hosted by NFDC will continue to operate in its present form including storing and disseminating monitoring data from the Regional Programmes within the national network.
- 5.4. Large local authorities, such as NFDC, are expected to make a wider contribution to the local authority community and to take a lead role in national initiatives where appropriate skills are available. Such contributions to the community are reflected in periodic national assessments of local authorities and these have previously highlighted NFDCs strength in this area.

6. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ROLE – SOUTHEAST REGION

- 6.1. NFDC will continue to act as the Lead Authority for the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme, with continued input from the partner authorities of Adur & Worthing Councils, Canterbury City Council, Havant Borough Council and the Environment Agency. NFDC will continue to receive funding for the whole of the Southeast programme. In essence NFDC will act as a “clearing house” to distribute funding to the other partner authorities.
- 6.2. NFDC will continue to be responsible for the framework agreements and subsequent contract awards and contract administration.
- 6.3. Service level Agreements will be established with the partner authorities of:-
 - Adur & Worthing Councils
 - Canterbury City Council
 - Havant Borough Council

These will be for undertaking topographic surveys, single beam bathymetry surveys, data analysis and provision of annual reports.

6.4. NFDC staff costs over the six year programme are currently estimated at £3.4m, this allows for undertaking the following services:-

- Topographic surveys
- Bathymetric surveys
- Ecological monitoring
- Development and maintenance of an asset database
- Regional data management and analysis
- National data archive delivery and analysis
- Regional and National Project management

7. APPLICATIONS AND APPROVALS

7.1. Before Phase III of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes can proceed it must be approved by the Environment Agency, through the Coast Protection Act of 1949.

7.2. An Outline Business Case (OBC) is being prepared by NFDC (on behalf of the lead partners for the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes) for submission to the Environment Agency's Large Project Review Group. The anticipated date of submission is December 2019.

7.3. Approval is being sought for the programme on a six year national phasing. The current application being prepared is for the period April 2021 through to March 2027.

7.4. Once programme approval is received there will be a requirement to complete the programme in accordance with the application.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1. The Channel Coastal Observatory will continue in its current form as established for the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. Operational costs will continue to be 100% funded through the national programme, in accordance with grant memoranda.

8.2. NFDC employs 10 FTE officers for operation and development of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes and delivery of the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. It is currently estimated that no additional staff will be required.

8.3. The office facilities currently provided by the National Oceanography Centre are delivered on the basis of agreements which conclude at the end of each monitoring phase. There are no additional cost risks associated with these hosting arrangements, beyond the life of each phase.

9. BENEFITS TO NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

9.1. Benefits of leading the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes, and the Channel Coastal Observatory extend beyond those of the coastal monitoring programmes itself, which ensures a consistent,

standardised, targeted and freely available long-term dataset of coastal change to underpin coastal management.

9.2. The Channel Coastal Observatory comprises a team of expert surveyors and coastal scientists, and trains new staff in a range of specialist skills. These staff are available as a knowledge base for NFDC, facilitating the rapid utilisation of skills and expertise which includes:

- The provision of advice regarding local coastal processes, affecting the NFDC coastline.
- The ability to undertake analysis work on behalf of NFDC, reducing resource need within the coastal team itself.

The size of the team ensures that it is resilient to staff turnover, which guarantees that this knowledge base is maintained and readily available. It also ensures there is a continued pool of trained, knowledgeable staff available in the coastal management field, several of whom have gone on to work within the NFDC coastal team in the past.

9.3. NFDC has access to a number of innovative techniques and technologies through the Channel Coastal Observatory, which are available for wider use. Examples include:

- Rapid incident response monitoring in the event of storms, such as following the storms of 14th February 2014.
- Ongoing surveying at Barton Cliffs to assess cliff movement and stability.
- Pre- and Post- works surveys (for example related to recharge activities), and
- Surveys undertaken for other services within the council.

9.4. The Channel Coastal Observatory maintains a strong working relationship with the research and higher education communities, including long standing relationships with the University of Southampton, and National Oceanography Centre, Southampton. This ensures that NFDC keeps abreast of the latest developments, methods and theory regarding coastal process science, survey and monitoring techniques and coastal management theory allowing the coastal team to remain at the cutting edge of coastal management.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1.If Phase III of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes application is successful, it will be funded by grant aid administered by the Environment Agency, via the normal capital coast protection scheme funding process, for the period of six years (2021 to 2027).

10.2.If the programme application is unsuccessful there will be staffing costs to NFDC as identified in 7.3.

10.3.The programme will be 100% funded through the Coast Protection Act grant rate system based on grant memorandum criteria. I.e. there will be no additional cost to the authority.

10.4. The current estimated cost of the national monitoring programme is in the order of £37M (allowing for contingency) over the proposed 6 years of the programme.

10.5. The financial responsibility for NFDC will be for £11.5M expenditure, this will allow for the delivery of the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme along with management and co-ordination of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes.

10.6. The current practice of payment and recharging partners based on a service level agreement will be used for the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes. The existing recharging structure will be revised as required and agreed with corporate accountancy, to ensure that there is no financial risk to NFDC throughout programme delivery.

10.7. The economic analysis demonstrates that the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes has the potential for large-scale, region-wide, actual and efficiency savings to the taxpayer.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Improved decision making for both environmental impacts and financing of national, regional and local coastal protection schemes and initiatives.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None arising directly from this report.

13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None arising directly from this report.

14. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

14.1 I fully support the funding application being made for the continued delivery of this programme and for NFDC to continue as the lead organisation.

14.2 The benefits to NFDC of maintaining the role as the lead authority both nationally and locally are greatly valued by members. With there being a clear demonstration of the commitment within the whole team.

Further Information

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