

## **Scrutiny Committee 22 November 2023**

### **4. Public Questions**

#### **4.1.1 Substantive question from Linda Adcock:**

There are many factors which are causing coastal erosion is the council looking at the effects of inland development with the land being built on, new road networks hard surface areas like drives ways etc this water will cut through sandy cliff areas making them unstable also run off into rivers causing flooding, as a development near to us causes floodings. Reference to the high street in Sheringham when surface water helped to collapse the main drain & the land slip at Cromer in the past years the lack of river maintenance & blocked road drains with no holding areas for surface water.

#### **4.1.2 Response from the Chair:**

There are multiple organisations and authorities with interests and different responsibilities for aspects of coastal erosion and flooding, as explained in a report to this Scrutiny Committee meeting. This split of roles requires a partnership approach to ensuring that the varying powers of the organisations involved, and the sources of funding that they have access to, are brought together in the most effective way to deal with the increasingly pressing challenges faced by our communities and coastline.

There are many contributory and changing factors that affect coastal erosion and flooding. When it comes to new developments, the local planning authority is responsible for making decisions, and where a development is of a significant scale then the local planning authority will also consult with the County Council in its role as a Lead Local Flood Authority, this is so that its view of the approach to surface water for a given development can be taken in to account before a decision is made.

#### **4.1.3 Supplementary question from Linda Adcock:**

Offshore development, has the council done any studies on the effects of wind farms, turbines & drilling into the sea bed & the effects these items have on tidal changes which a very recent report mentioned a river being blocked caused by a sand shift after a wind farm was put in place.

#### **4.1.4 Response from the Chair:**

Considerations such as this around offshore developments do not feature in the County Council's responsibilities. The lead body for regulating offshore activities is the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) but where the Council is a statutory consultee, it will raise concerns and considerations as appropriate.

#### **4.2.1 Substantive question from Tom Reed:**

There are many reasons for North Sea coastal erosion on east coast, occurring over millions of years, the least being 'global warming'. (See Prof Judith Curry). Could you please tell us if there has been research into effects of removal in 1980s by the government of the day, selling millions of tons of seabed which was the outer sand bar, to Holland. Sea action moves the sand, natural effect on coastal erosion being to replenish the outer sand bar back to its original state. The effects could be cause of beach at Gorleston being completely washed away at one time & at Kessingland the coast increased.

#### **4.2.2 Response from the Chair:**

There are multiple causes for coastal erosion, including considerations around geology, hydrogeology, isostatic rebound, extreme tidal conditions and changes in sea levels. When it comes to a strategic overview, this role is for the Environment Agency and not the County Council, however as there are multiple organisations and authorities with interests and different responsibilities for aspects of coastal erosion and flooding, this requires a partnership approach to ensuring that the varying powers of the organisations involved are brought together in the most effective manner when considerations are given to proposed developments.

#### **4.2.3 Supplementary question from Tom Reed:**

Is the Committee aware of any studies on the effects of the offshore wind farms on our coastline? Wouldn't anything blocking the normal flow of water be likely to have some effect, possibly detrimental.

#### **4.2.4 Response from the Chair:**

Considerations such as this around offshore developments do not feature in the County Council's responsibilities. The lead body for regulating offshore activities is the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) but where the Council is a statutory consultee, it will raise concerns and considerations as appropriate.

#### **4.3.1 Substantive question from Paul Smith:**

Has the Committee considered the effect of the moon on coastal erosion? Currently the moon is closer to the earth than it has been for 284 years which, in turn with planet alignments, is effecting all weather patterns. The moon is pulling magma, causing earthquakes, volcanic activity, changing the jet stream, tilting the earth affecting the north & south poles, causing large amount of rainfall over land causing flooding.

#### **4.3.2 Response from the Chair:**

Although the gravity effects of the moon has an influence on tides on Earth, it is widely understood to be the case that the moon's relative position to Earth is not the main factor affecting coastal erosion.

**4.3.3      Supplementary question from Paul Smith:**

Are elected members familiar with the research of Professor Judith Curry & Professor William Happer, academics who carefully identify the difference between CO<sub>2</sub> and pollution?

**4.3.4      Response from the Chair:**

Although it is appreciated that there is a wide range of views on climate change, globally and nationally policy and understanding is driven by peer review of the science involved and establishment of consensus.