

Working together to adapt to a changing climate: flood and coast

Future sea level rise and extreme rainfall due to climate change will increase flood and coastal erosion risk for many communities. Where existing measures will not reduce these long term risks, alternative sustainable options may be required. Developing a common understanding of how to manage the future of a community in light of flood and coastal erosion risk is an immense challenge for all involved. Making decisions based on uncertain climate change predictions when the range of options are potentially unknown presents additional challenges.

This project is addressing these challenges. In two different locations it is designing and evaluating a **community engagement programme** creating a shared understanding of flood risk. The research will pilot new approaches, learning and adapting as the programme develops according to their effectiveness. It will produce accessible resources tailored to flood and coastal erosion risk management authorities.



What are the project's objectives?

- 1) To review evidence on community engagement on climate adaptation and use findings to design next phase of research. This will include a shortlisting phase to select 2 pilot areas. **April 2018 - March 2019**
- 2) To design, deliver and evaluate the first 18 months of the engagement programme, resulting in a framework to aid collaborative decision making in 2 areas where long term management is complex and contentious. **December 2019 – June 2021**

The project will produce interim outputs for each stage.

The project is being delivered by Icarus, a specialist engagement consultancy. It is funded and managed by the Joint Environment Agency (EA), Defra, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Welsh Government FCERM (flood and coastal erosion risk management) R&D Programme.

What's happened to date?

We have to date delivered an [Evidence Review](#), which reviewed over 300 publications and is supporting the development of the engagement programme. This was published in summer 2019.

We selected the following two locations to trial engagement:

1. Caterham on the Hill and Old Coulsdon, Surrey/Croydon
This urbanised area experiences a combination of surface water, river and sewer flooding. Authorities in the area are currently looking at a range of options to reduce the impact of flooding – which is likely to include a combination of measures. This pilot is led by Surrey County Council locally.

2. Hemsby and Winterton, Norfolk

These villages are at risk of coastal erosion and storm surges, having already lost a number of properties during storm events. They are currently looking at interim coastal defences alongside adaptation options. This pilot is led locally by Coastal Partnership East.

We have set up a project steering group in each area, which includes representatives from multiple risk management agencies, residents groups and key stakeholders. These steering groups are now working together to co-design an engagement plan for each location. Materials will be finalised in early summer 2020 and rolled out to communities from July 2020 (taking into account Covid-19 government guidance).

Over the last 2 years we have carried out various dissemination activities to keep those involved up to date. We have been running quarterly webinars for a project practitioner group to help connect those working on similar issues and receive feedback on the project. These have had up to 75 attendees. We have presented the findings of the evidence review to RFCC Chairs and EA FCERM Directors, and have presented at a webinar for EA Flood Risk Managers, to inform them and ask for input to pilot locations. We are continually engaging with the EA's Working with Others and Flood Risk Engagement Advisor networks.



Who's involved?

- **Project board** - representation from Icarus, EA, NRW and a local authority
- **Practitioner group** (signed-up for regular updates) - 200 engagement staff from EA, NRW, local authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, Coastal Groups, rivers trusts, the National Flood Forum, the National Farmers Union, voluntary organisations and more
- Engagement across EA directorates and teams: EA Future Strategy and Investment Portfolio Board, EA FCERM Strategy and National Adaptation Teams, EA's Working with Others and Flood Risk Engagement Advisor Networks

What are the next steps?

- Trial new engagement methods, conduct local research and design engagement programme with pilot area steering groups – **Autumn 2019 – summer 2020**
- Finalise engagement programme with pilot areas (considering most suitable options to protect health and wellbeing under Covid-19) **Spring – summer 2020**
- Roll out engagement to wider community – **Summer 2020 – spring 2021**
- Consolidation of progress and working out next steps for each area – **Spring – summer 2021**
- Write-up and dissemination of results – **Autumn 2021**

Contact

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