

January 2022

Yaverland Coastal Defence Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

Where will the scheme be and what about the areas outside of it?

The scheme will cover approximately 1.2km from the Yaverland Beach car park at the northern end, to the junction of Crescent Road and Culver Parade at its southern extent. This covers the area where the seawall forms a high embankment along Culver Parade, and the seawalls in front of the Zoo area to the north. This area was identified as a priority for sea defence remedial work through the Sandown Bay Initial Appraisal and Scheme Identification Study, carried out by the Isle of Wight Council and completed in 2018. The Environment Agency is also working on schemes in Shanklin, Ventnor, Cowes and East Cowes, and at Embankment Road in Bembridge.

Sandown and Yaverland are connected with Brading Marshes and Bembridge Harbour through the low-lying Eastern Yar valley, as without the seawall embankments at both ends of the valley, sea flooding could enter the river valley. The Environment Agency will therefore be taking a coordinated approach to ensure sea flood risk is managed on a catchment scale.

Why do we need the scheme?

The scheme aims to reduce the risks of flooding from high tides, waves, and winter storms. The area of land behind Culver Parade is low-lying and at risk from flooding as a result of waves overtopping the sea wall and embankment. The sea wall was originally built in the early 1900s and, whilst some refurbishment work has been done since then, the sea wall is ageing and deteriorating. The Environment Agency have assessed the condition of both the sea wall and groynes, and found areas of fair and poor condition which require improving. If the Environment Agency do nothing, the sea wall and groynes will continue to deteriorate and there is a risk that the sea wall could breach allowing sea water to flow into the low lying area behind. This would put hundreds of homes at risk of flooding from the sea, as well as key infrastructure, businesses, and protected environmental habitats.

What is the impact of climate change?

Increasing sea levels and wave heights as well as the frequency of winter storms are anticipated to increase as a result of climate change. The Environment Agency will take these changes into account by using computer modelling to predict the impact of sea level rise on the Sandown Bay area. The results will be used to help design a scheme that will be part of a 100 year plan aiming to reduce the increasing risks. The modelling will use the latest guidance and data on climate change.

More information on climate change can be found [here](#).

Who is responsible for the sea wall and groynes?

The Environment Agency, together with Coastal Protection Authorities (CPAs) such as the Isle of Wight Council, have permissive powers to protect against coastal flooding and to carry out erosion defence works. However, this is not a legal obligation. This means that the Environment Agency and the Isle of Wight Council have the 'power to' carry out coastal protection works but are not duty bound to do so and will not be liable for the failure to exercise these powers.

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The ability to exercise these powers is also constrained by the need to take into account the costs and benefits (both tangible and intangible) of any investment, as set out in HM Treasury and Defra guidance. In general, the Environment Agency and CPAs will only act where there is a clear economic benefit and/or an appropriate engineering solution that is achievable, and where environmental legislation is not contravened.

Ownership of the sea wall and groynes in the Yaverland scheme area is divided between the Environment Agency and the Isle of Wight Council. Ownership of the sea wall between approximately the southern corner of the boating lake and the Grand Hotel is unknown, however, the Environment Agency have historically maintained this section.

Once any scheme is completed, it is intended that the current ownership or maintenance arrangements will continue.

Are you going to be working with others on this project?

The Environment Agency have formed a team made up of industry experts from the Environment Agency, Isle of Wight Council, JBA Consulting and VolkerStevin. The Environment Agency will also be working closely with stakeholders and the wider community throughout the delivery of the scheme.

The views of the local community will be key in ensuring the successful delivery of this project. If you would like to contact the delivery team with any specific question not covered here or would just like to be kept informed throughout the scheme's development, please [email us](#).

How will the scheme be funded?

On behalf of the UK government, the Environment Agency prioritises and allocates funding to flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) schemes using a partnership funding approach. Securing funding is dependent on the benefits and outcomes delivered by a scheme. Funding contributions from other sources such as local levy (raised by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees), private or public organisations, the local community or developers may be required to enable the release of FCERM Grant in Aid (GiA) funding.

When calculating the benefits (also described as flood or erosion damages avoided) a FCERM scheme delivers, a baseline must first be established. This can be thought of as 'what would be at risk if we did nothing?' This process considers the maximum area likely to be impacted, and in the case of flooding, to what depth and for what duration. The next stage is to explore land use, for example, what will be affected by flooding or erosion. This could include, but is not limited to: residential properties, commercial properties including retail, warehouses, industry, road and rail networks, utilities such as gas, electricity, telecoms and water supplies. Additionally, recreation, education and health services are incorporated along with local council and emergency recovery costs. Finally, agriculture and environmental damages are also captured. Damages can be defined as direct or indirect, where direct damages include physical impacts and indirect damages can be realised beyond the area immediately affected. For example, failure of a sewerage treatment works could have far reaching effects.

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Once the total amount of damages has been calculated, the actual cost of the proposed works and the period of time the scheme will be effective for, are all considered. Finally, a tariff system is employed to determine exactly how much government FCERM (GiA) a scheme can ultimately attract. Currently, the assets attracting the greatest proportion of FCERM GiA are residential properties, with additional sums being made available for those living in the nation's most deprived areas.

More information relating to FCERM GiA partnership funding can be found [here](#).

When will the construction work take place and how long will it last?

Construction work is currently estimated to commence in September 2024, and be completed by September 2026, if funding can be obtained to meet the full cost of the scheme. These are preliminary dates that will be subject to change as plans progress, and the Environment Agency will work with partners and stakeholders to agree acceptable timings for construction activities.

What are you building? What will it look like? Will the works affect access to the seafront and beach? How will the works impact upon tourism?

As the options are still being developed, the Environment Agency do not yet know for certain what the works will look like, or the type of machinery required. Once further information is known, the Environment Agency will consult with residents, businesses and other key organisations, such as infrastructure providers, who may be affected to understand concerns and share what plans will be put in place to minimise disruption.

Will the beach be the same after the works?

As the options are still being developed, the Environment Agency do not yet know for certain what the works will entail, and how the beach will be affected. The Environment Agency understands the importance of the beach, not only for tourism and recreation and because it is an integral part of the town's character, but also the benefits it offers for flood defence. The groynes, which help retain beach material, may be near the end of their useful life and are likely to need refurbishing or replacing. This is, however, likely to be expensive and would need to be justified in terms of the benefit it would bring to reducing flood risk in order to qualify for some government Grant in Aid funding. The Environment Agency will be looking at the how to balance these issues, and working closely with stakeholders and the Isle of Wight Council to do this.

What will the environmental impact of the scheme be?

The Environment Agency is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment through all it does. The Environment Agency's ambition for how it plans to create better places for people, wildlife and the environment is set out in our 5 year plan: EA2025 creating a better place, found [here](#).

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The Environment Agency's target for the Isle of Wight priority schemes is to achieve 20% biodiversity net gain. This means that development must leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before. 20% is a higher standard than usual and reflects the Island's biosphere designation and the growing desire to deliver schemes that enhance the environment as well as performing a coastal defence role.

Will your scheme reduce the risk of flooding from the Eastern Yar river?

The Yaverland Coastal Defence scheme will reduce the risk of flooding from the sea. The Environment Agency is aware that there are other sources of flooding, such as river and surface water flooding, which have affected nearby properties in recent years. The Environment Agency will be undertaking flood modelling to better understand the interaction of tidal and river flooding in the Eastern Yar valley but the coastal defence works will not have a direct impact on any existing flood risks arising from the Eastern Yar. The Environment Agency will ensure that these risks are not increased as a result of any work undertaken along the coastline.

How can local businesses get involved?

The Environment Agency's procurement mission statement is to achieve best value, best practice and the most sustainable outcome. The government has set a target of 33% of central government buying to go to small businesses by 2022. The Environment Agency is committed to supporting this target and look to ensure a fair and equal opportunity for all to bid for its contracts. The Environment Agency also encourages its larger suppliers to consider small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in their sub-contracting opportunities.

Under our Next Generation Supplier Arrangement for the delivery of Capital schemes, the Environment Agency have appointed Jeremy Benn Associates Ltd (JBA) and VolkerStevin Ltd (VS) to help deliver its flood and coastal defence programme in the South East of England. VS will be the appointed contractor until the end of the current framework in 2023, when the arrangement will be reviewed. Currently, the Environment Agency is still developing options and don't yet know what any construction works will entail. Once options progress, the Environment Agency will provide more detail on how SMEs can get involved.

How can I find out more?

Throughout this project there will be numerous opportunities for you to feed into its development. The Environment Agency will continue to update you and provide ongoing opportunities to seek your input and opinions.

The Environment Agency would encourage all interested parties in the area and neighbouring communities to sign up to updates by registering your interest at IOW_FDschemas@environment-agency.gov.uk. The Environment Agency would also encourage you to support any family members, friends or neighbours who cannot access online information, by sharing our updates with them.