

About the project

The Upper Alde and Ore Estuary Embankment Improvement Project is Phase 1 of the Alde and Ore Estuary Plan implementation. The Plan's purpose is to upgrade the river walls so that flooding risk to towns, villages, farming land and wildlife habitat is significantly reduced. This Newsletter provides an update on work since February 2024. There is a virtual room for the project where you can read about it, watch an information video, provide feedback and see all previous newsletters: [Alde & Ore Whole Estuary Plan Virtual Engagement Room](#).

What's been happening

Over the last 6 months the project focus has been to complete the detailed design in FC 6, Snape Maltings, where the buildings have Grade 2* listed status. Working closely with Britten Pears Arts, the approach balances structural engineering components of this flood defence scheme with the vastly significant heritage, arts, and economic value of these assets. A Listed Building Consent application is ready for submission and forms a vital part of the preparation before construction can start. This task is nearing completion.

Final designs are close to being agreed. It will then be possible to appoint a Contractor to provide a market-based construction cost estimate. We will then hold a fully competitive tender for the main construction works at Snape Maltings in 2025, prior to the main delivery.

Ecology

Throughout 2023, we completed surveys of protected species and habitat in the four upper estuary flood cells. We produced environmental data maps to support the mitigation strategy required for flood defence works: an approach to ensure the Embankment upgrade does not adversely affect the supportive environment for target species.

The survey of water voles has been mapped for each flood cell to provide visual confirmation of population, extent and number. A bespoke approach is needed to manage Water Vole mitigation across all flood cells and requires a licence from Natural England.

Parts of the estuary walls have significant populations of molluscs, including the rare and tiny narrow-mouthed whorl snail (*Vertigo angustior*), which are also likely to require bespoke mitigation techniques. For water voles and snails this would create opportunities for significant local population gain in the longer term.

Breeding and wintering bird field surveys are complete, providing extensive mapping. Important Schedule 1 bird species, such as avocets, and habitat for marsh harrier has been documented in FC 5. These results are now being used to aid conversations with Natural England to shape the mitigation plans.

Summary reports, compiled for all this important field data, are being shared with Natural England, ensuring we have an acceptable mitigation strategy approach prior to formal submission.

Source: www.buglife.org.uk
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Source: © Andrew Dore 2020



Source: www.RSPB.org.uk

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Other Statutory Permits

When we need to divert footpaths, we will make phased applications in line with each Flood Cell work programme. By the end of November 2024, we will be able to submit our Flood Risk Activity Permit to the Environment Agency (EA). This will include Construction Phase Plan, Health, Safety and Environment documentation. This is critical to gaining EA support for the detailed design work in the Phase 1 Upper Estuary project.

Design

Outline draft designs are complete for FC 5 Iken, FC 7 Snape Village and FC 10 Aldeburgh. By the end of July, FC 6 Snape Maltings detailed design will be complete, we will finish the detailed designs in the remaining flood cells. Then, further discussions and consultation will take place with owners of the land around the exact proposals for construction. These plans might need to be revised which will influence the overall timing of delivery programmes.

Project costs

The project costs set out in the approved Outline Business Case included an allowance for inflationary and risk contingencies, but before we start construction, we will need to ensure we have a robust update of the total project costs. We will discuss any changes with East Suffolk Water Management Board and the Alde & Ore Estuary Trust to ensure they understand any cost variation.

Programme

Given application timeframes for all permits and discussion of mitigation plans with Natural England the revised programme dates are;

1. Flood Risk Activity Permit from the Environment Agency: Spring 25
2. Water vole licence from Natural England — Spring 25
3. Commence construction at FC 6 Snape Maltings — Autumn 25
4. Commence construction on FC 5, 7 and 10 — Spring 26
5. Completion — Autumn 28

We will continue to work closely with both the Alde & Ore Community Partnership and the Alde & Ore Estuary Trust throughout this process.

Lower Estuary

The Outline Business Case for Phase 2, the Lower Estuary, is being worked on and is planned to be submitted to the Environment Agency in 2025.



Where

This phase of works covers the four Upper Alde and Ore Estuary Flood Cells (FC). See map (right)

These include Iken (FC 5), Snape Maltings (FC 6), Snape Village (FC 7) and Aldeburgh Town Marsh (FC 10).

Contact us

Get involved

This information is to let you know about the vital work we are doing in your community. We are happy to come along to community groups and residential associations to explain more about the work. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this in more detail. We will keep you up to date with any further developments.



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The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust: *Funding the whole estuary embankment improvement works*



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Alde & Ore Community Partnership

