Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Drainage Board

Benacre & Kessingland Flood Management Project

November 2023

About the project

The Benacre & Kessingland flood risk management project aims to provide a sustainable flood risk solution for Kessingland village and the Lothingland Valley. Coastal flood risks and erosion threaten the existing Environment Agency Pumping Station, putting homes, businesses, farmland and vital infrastructure at risk.

The scheme involves constructing a new embankment across the Lothingland Valley to manage tidal flooding on the A12, along with a new pumping station for river level management. Additionally, a new embankment will be built south of Kessingland, including a small pumping station to address surface water flooding, while the existing Environment Agency pumping station will be decommissioned and demolished.

This mitigates potential flooding from the structural collapse of the outfall defences at Benacre Pumping Station, erosion to the north and south, and wave overtopping from the barrier beach's to the south.

The Outline Business Case for this project gained approval in December 2021, with funding secured from Central Government, Suffolk County Council, and the Regional Flood and Coast Committee.

Scheme benefits

- 35 residential properties and 46 commercial properties will be at reduced flood risk
- Creation of 82ha of new intertidal habitat
- 52km of river enhanced
- Flood protection to the A12
- Valuable freshwater resources protected from inundation by sea water
- 600ha of farmland in the floodplain will be better protected from flood risk
- Valuable fresh water abstraction within the valley protected from inundation from sea water

Funding

Balfour Beatty have now priced the completed detail design. Due to well documented commercial reasons and not entirely unexpectedly, costs have escalated since the initial funding was applied for. The total is significantly higher than the approved amount. Therefore, we have had to put together what's called a variation order to seek additional funding which we submitted to the Environment Agency at the end of August for their consideration. In this we have explained and given evidential reasons for the increase. It will now go through a review process where we will need to respond to queries and await confirmation of the additional funding prior to progressing in to the Construction phase.

However, the project is not on hold and we have approval from the project board to progress into the "Pre-construction Stage", which will start at the beginning of November 2023.

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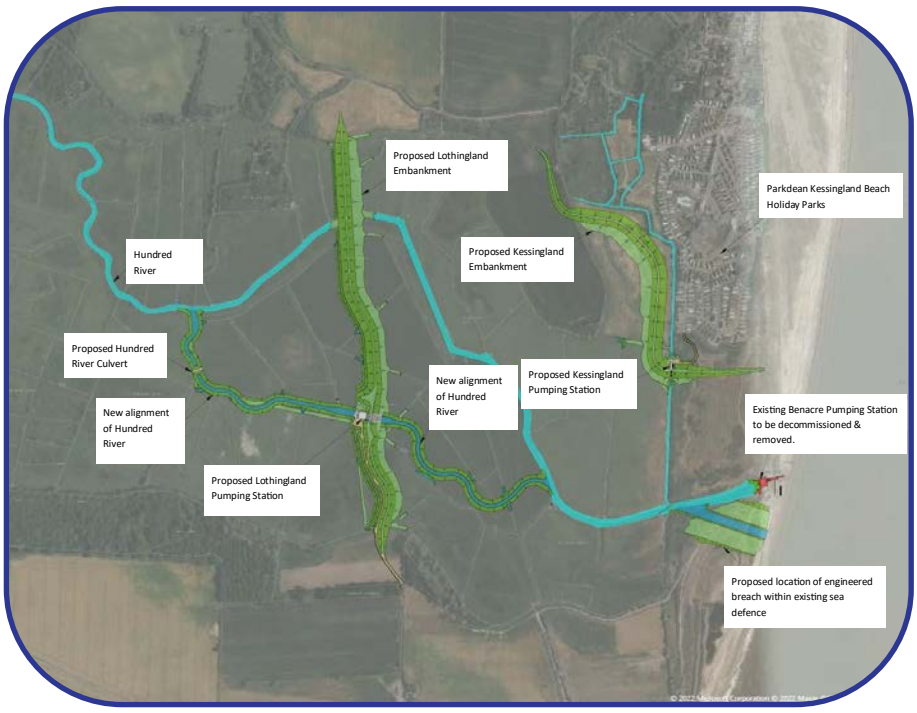
What have we been doing?

Since our last update, Stantec, have finalised the detailed design and we're now entering the "Pre-construction Stage". The drawing (below) illustrates the location of the new defences. The area between the existing Benacre Pumping Station and the new Lothingland Valley embankment will become intertidal habitat.



We've obtained and applied for various licenses and consents, including Habitats Regulations Assessment, Natural England assent, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), and Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP). We're also progressing towards establishing legal agreements with major stakeholders.

We have enhanced Water Vole habitats, by improving approximately 4km of ditches and watercourses and have 30 activity monitoring rafts in place.

Geophysical surveys conducted by the Museum of London Archeology (MOLA) aim to assess the project's impact on buried archaeology.

ABPmer has completed a coastal modelling report, offering insights and scenarios for intertidal habitat creation and proposed sea breach design.

UK Power Networks has confirmed designs for the underground cable routes and the removal of existing overhead supply.

Balfour Beatty Stantec

Current programme key dates

Full Design completed: *July 2023*

Enabling works (Water Vole Habitat Mitigation): *Commenced February 2023*

Pre-construction Stage Start: *November 2023*

Construction Start: *Spring 2025*

Construction Completion: *Autumn 2028*

Upcoming work

During the “Pre-construction Stage” Balfour Beatty will proceed with detailed planning, programming and engagement with stakeholders. They will also further investigate “value engineering” opportunities to possibly reduce costs. This work will enable us to be ready to start on site when the funding is agreed. At this point we will be able to accelerate mobilisation, for example.

Once all licences, consents and funding are in place we will instruct Balfour Beatty to start work on road improvements and passing bays from the A12 to site, site compound set up and haulage roads across the valley for construction traffic.

Water Management Alliance · Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Drainage Board · Environment Agency · Suffolk County Council · The Benacre Estate · Natural England