

Coastal Schemes with Multiple Funders and Objectives FD2635

Case Study Report 4 East Head Beach Recharge



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This case study is one of 14 documents supporting the research project Coastal Schemes with Multiple Objectives and Funders - Case Studies FD2635, available from <http://tinyurl.com/6dzyusy>. This research was conducted in 2010/2011 by Maslen Environmental on behalf of Defra and the Environment Agency's Research and Development programme.

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1 Case Study: East Head Beach Recharge

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Description

East Head is situated at the far end of West Wittering, it is owned and cared for by the National Trust (NT) with the support of West Wittering Estate Plc (see Figure 1). East Head has moved clockwise, from lying due west across the entrance to Chichester harbour, to north pointing into the harbour (see Figure 2).



Figure 1. East Head. Image courtesy of the National Trust

The problems at East Head stem from historical engineering activities constraining natural processes. The traditional management practices were not found to be sustainable over the longer term. The East Head Beach Recharge Scheme was triggered by erosion processes and local concerns as there was a fear that a new channel would form at East Head through the narrowest point known as the 'hinge'. This could have serious implications for harbour navigation, management of East Head and flood risks for residential property. Interested stakeholders were brought together into the East Head Coastal Issues Advisory Group (EHCIAG) under the auspices of the Environment Agency as part of the development of the 'Pagham to East Head Draft Coastal Defence Strategy'.

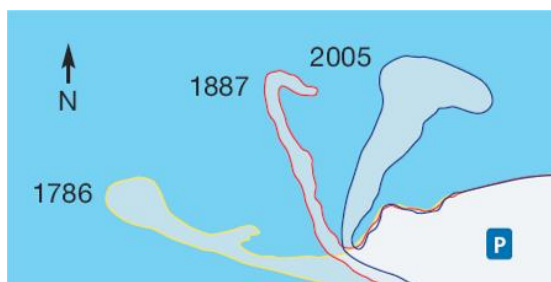


Figure 2. East Head has moved clockwise, from lying due west across the entrance of the harbour, to north pointing into the

harbour. These stakeholders had at the outset quite different approaches to the management of the issues at East Head.

Phase 1 (2003) and 2 (2009) of the scheme has involved beach recharge at West Wittering to help stabilise the narrowest point of the estuary. Phase 3 (which has not yet been implemented) includes proposals for a geotextile 'sock' to be built on the

landward side of the narrowest point so if sea overtops and begins to break through, it will not form a channel. This will have a limited life of 25 years due to sea-level rise.

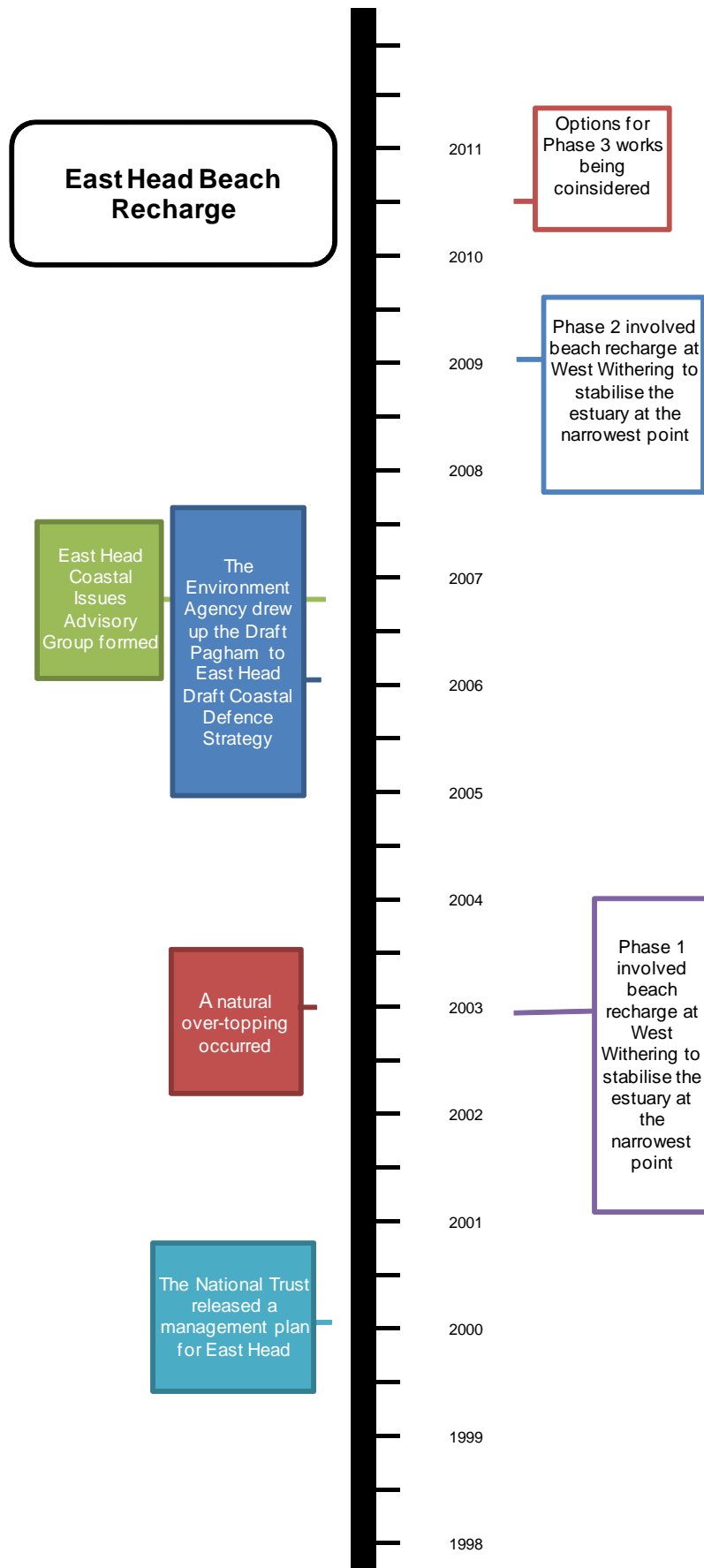


Figure 3. Timeline for East Head Beach Recharge Scheme

1.1.2 Objective Settings

1.1.3 Project Drivers

In 2000, the NT proposed a Management Plan for East Head, this stated that the management aim was to work with natural processes. However, Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC) felt the policy of 'Hold the Line' was most appropriate as was the case under the 'Pagham to East Head Draft Coastal Defence Strategy'. At the time they felt that the proposed working with natural processes may damage navigational access through sand infilling of the main navigation channel. Navigational access is one of the primary sources of CHC income. Navigation is also a 'statutory duty' for CHC. Boat owners were perceived by CHC as a very important 'community' in the Harbour. Support for NT and Natural England's (NE) 'No Active Intervention' proposals at East Head was limited.

In 2003, a natural over-topping occurred on the 'neck' and within a short time significant funding was pledged by local people to reinstate it, with hard engineering if necessary. The West Wittering neck/hinge was partly recharged and this was supported by the pre-existing approved Local Authority and Environment Agency's policies for the area.

In 2006, the Environment Agency prepared the development of a new draft Coastal Defence Strategy for Pagham Harbour to East Head, which would form the basis for actions arising from the Shoreline Management Plan. This was published in 2008 and proposed 'Adaptive' Management at East Head. East Head Adaptive Management must be aimed at preserving the environmental amenity and socio-economic value of the feature including the management of effects on the wider harbour. This now provides the agreed policy framework in which the partners and stakeholders work to develop appropriate management interventions at East Head.

The development and then adoption of an innovative 'Adaptive' Management policy for East Head was a key driver enabling the different interested parties to work together as a wider partnership.

1.1.4 Partnership Objectives

The collective partner objective is described as, achieving a common way of working for the best and most sustainable evolution of the coastline.

Each partner has different interests (statutory / non statutory) in relation to the management of East Head. Due to the disagreements and conflicting interests of those involved, an East Head Working Group (EHWG) formed (later known as the EHCIAG). Lead by the Environment Agency, the principal partners have an agreed draft Terms of Reference that sets out objectives, constraints and importantly the idea of 'triggers' for management interventions. The 'triggers' i.e. the point in time and type of management actions that should be followed are still being worked on by the Group.

1.2 Project Objectives

Sustainable management of the coast was the main driver for the East Head Beach Recharge scheme as there was a fear that a new channel would form at East Head.

1.3 Partnerships

1.3.1 Building the Partnership

The processes operating around East Head are complex. To get a better understanding of these issues and the approaches needed to manage them the EHCIAG was formed. This group provided the forum for discussions and sharing knowledge across, organisations involved who were divided in terms of the perceived way forward to manage the area. The EHCIAG was chaired by an independent consultant appointed by the Environment Agency and was tasked with developing a strategy through the group. The EHCIAG was composed of engineers, CDC officer representatives, the Environment Agency, NE, CHC and key land holding interests such as NT, West Wittering Estates, Cakeham Manor Estates and local groups such as Parish Councils.

EHCIAG set up the 'Expert Panel' to consult and jointly answer key technical questions from the various local groups who required more clarification. All the stakeholders and partners were agreed on the composition of this panel (e.g. coastal geomorphology). The Expert Panel was disbanded when all parties were suitably satisfied and expertise for the future was accepted by all parties from the University of Portsmouth.

1.3.2 Partnership Working the Governance

The agreement over the appropriate management policies for East Head took over seven years of meetings and partnership working. The emergence of the draft Coastal Defence Strategy document was a key turning point. The EHCIAG now work as a unified partnership and meet four times a year to discuss 'Adaptive' management approaches.

1.4 Approvals, Planning and Legislation

15 licences were required for the scheme (including Environment Agency licences, Planning Consent from CDC, Coastal Protection Act (CPA) licence). A wide range of different people were employed to assist.

1.5 Funding Arrangements

Finance was not a major hurdle as work associated with East Head funds were left in trust (F.G. Woodger Trust) with local people to conserve West Wittering Village for the local people. Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the scheme (the beach recharge) cost approximately £50,000 which and was funded by the F. G. Woodger Trust (£25,000 for Phase 1 and £35,000 for Phase 2).

It was felt that all the parties contributed equally to the achievements at East Head. All partners made financial contributions towards the EHCIAG. The Environment Agency funded the group working, covered the cost of an independent Chairman and worked on the approvals and licences. As coastal protection authority, CDC acted as Project Manager and administered the licenses. West Wittering Estate paid for rope and posts. The NT provided in-kind contribution using 30 staff for a week.

Funding for the Phase 3 work is currently being explored.

1.6 Lessons Learnt

- Finance has not been a major hurdle for Phase 1 & 2 of the scheme as funds in trust (F.G. Woodger Trust) to protect West Wittering Village are available. However, other local schemes are now competing for the F. G. Woodger Trust funds, thus timing is crucial when achieving external funding;
- Good example of setting objectives collectively and development EHWG Draft Terms of Reference to assist;
- "Establishing a common understanding was a key issue and a real struggle in the early phases. The 'Expert Panel' was set up to overcome these issues and recommended working at other good case study examples, e.g. Spurn Head" (Lawrence, 2011);
- The EHWG formed to allow stakeholders with diverse interest to work together on shared sustainable solutions;
- The key to this was what was described as 'Adaptive' Management; this involves an open commitment to examining the area with all parties agreeing to the principles as laid out in the EHWG Draft Terms of Reference and the Coast Defence Strategy;
- Everyone must have commitment to compromise and given the opportunity to understand the depth of technical issues and different attitudes and organisational interests;
- The EHCIAG is still working together on the consultation as part of the Environment Agency's Pagham to East Head Draft Coastal Defence Strategy;
- This model of working with other partners and communities is now being considered at other locations e.g. Selsey Bill. A local scheme at Medmerry (less than 10 miles away) is starting and they are drawing on best practice examples from the East Head Scheme.

1.7 References

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