

North Yorkshire Council

Environment Executive Members

22 August 2025

Acceptance of Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy for Flat Cliffs Coastal Adaptation Plan and wider Filey Bay Coastal Change Management Area

Report of the Assistant Director – Regulatory Services and Harbours

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Request approval from the Chief Financial Officer, sub delegated to the Assistant Director – Resources (Environment), in consultation with the Corporate Director- Environment to accept funding from the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy to undertake a Coastal Adaptation Plan for the community of Flat Cliffs
- 1.2 To notify following acceptance of the funding, a consultant will be procured to provide specialist technical support in producing the coastal adaptation plan and considering the establishment of a Coastal Change Management Area within the wider Filey Bay

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 North Yorkshire Council has inherited the role of Coast Protection Authority, historically undertaken by the former Scarborough Borough Council. In this role, the Council is responsible for carrying out coastal protection works and coastal erosion risk management activities. Coastal Protection Authorities are responsible for developing Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) which provide a long-term holistic framework for managing coastal change on their section of coast. The Council's adopted Shoreline Management Plan is the River Tyne to Flamborough Head SMP2.
- 2.2 The Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2007) has a policy of No Active Intervention for the frontage covering Flat Cliffs, allowing the natural development of the coast. No coastal defences are in place to protect the community and none are planned across the 100-year horizon of the SMP.
- 2.3 This area is covered by the approved Filey and Cayton Bay Coastal Strategy (2018). The strategy sets out coastal intent, policy and how assets will be managed now and in the future. The strategy sets and confirms policy for the next 100 years. The action is to develop a plan for the adaptation of the communities at risk.
- 2.4 The Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (YRFCC) comes together as a regional partnership to take an overview of flood and coastal erosion risk management. They also seek to promote investment and encourage innovation which is good value for money and benefits communities. RFCCs raise a Local Levy on Lead Local Flood Authorities, including North Yorkshire Council, which provides an invaluable resource to help fund local flood and coast priorities.

- 2.5 The Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) National Strategy sets out the vision for a nation that is ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change today, tomorrow and to the year 2100. One of the long-term ambitions is a nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change. However, there is no central government funding mechanism in place to assist undefended communities to adapt and be ready for coastal change, as adaptation is not currently eligible for Environment Agency grant in aid.
- 2.6 To date, there isn't an example of a coastal adaptation plan adopted by a maritime Local Authority in England. The YRFCC was identified as a suitable funder to fill the funding gap in delivering an innovative project that will proactively work with the community of Flat Cliffs to be ready for and be more resilient to coastal change, as described by the National Strategy.
- 2.7 Permission to apply to the YRFCC Local Levy was granted by the Executive Member at a public meeting of the Environment Directorate - Corporate Director and Executive Member - Highways and Transportation held 28 March 2025. Following permission to apply, a robust application that merited consideration was submitted to the YRFCC Local Levy using their pilot study proforma.
- 2.8 The proposals received praise from regional partners during the Local Levy assurance process and were recommended for approval at a meeting of the Committee on 17 July 2025, for which we are pleased to report approval was received.

3.0 DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

- 3.1 At Flat Cliffs, the Strategy recommended an option of 'limited intervention prior to coastal adaptation'. Subsequently, a project was completed in 2018 to provide local management measures at the pinch point where the sole access road was at risk of imminent loss. The works are intended to prolong the duration before its loss, whilst acknowledging that recession processes would continue. The solution is a temporary one intended to 'buy some time' to allow the residents of the forty-five homes and Yorkshire Water to plan for adapting to coastal change and implement the necessary relocation and removal activities to withdraw themselves and their assets from the areas at risk.
- 3.2 North Yorkshire Council will produce a Coastal Adaptation Plan to raise awareness of the coastal risks within the affected community and support residents and affected parties in planning for change in the future. This will build upon the previous Strategy to look at the community in greater detail. The focus of the Coastal Adaptation Plan will be on identifying the expected timescales of loss for individual properties utilising the Environment Agency's newly published NCERM2 data, consulting with the affected residents and parties, and investigating and reaching a consensus on the way forward. (Appendix A)
- 3.3 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the policy lead for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. New or revised policies are prepared with other parts of government such as the Treasury, the Cabinet Office (for emergency response planning) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (for land-use and planning policy). These national policies are then delivered by Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), which includes North Yorkshire Council as Coast Protection Authority, amongst other key statutory functions.
- 3.4 Relevant service areas within North Yorkshire Council, such as Planning, Emergency Planning, Housing and Highways will be prepared to support the community to adapt through an agreed sequence of actions with identifiable trigger and decision points.

- 3.5 With reference to Planning, The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires councils to identify Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) where rates of shoreline change are expected to be significant over the next 100 years, considering impacts of climate change. There are no such designations on the North Yorkshire coast and the Local Planning Authority currently consults with coastal engineers on an ad-hoc basis in respect of managing any development within active coastal zones. In preparing the adaptation plan consideration will all be given to establishing a CCMA within the undefended areas of Filey Bay. There is the potential for planning policy to assist in mitigating the risk posed by coastal change in safeguarding vulnerable areas from further development.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Under the Do-Nothing option, awareness of the coastal erosion risk amongst residents may remain low. There would be no forward planning for managing the consequences of coastal erosion. Residents would be unprepared for the loss of properties creating difficulties for the Risk Management Authority to manage the process when the time comes for residents to have to leave. Significant mental health burden for residents becoming suddenly aware of the risks in an emergency situation, and with no forward plan for dealing with the risks, residents may be left feeling unsupported and isolated. Whilst the cost of this option is zero in the present day, it may increase the costs to the Risk Management Authorities for dealing with the issue as the properties become at imminent risk of loss.
- 4.2 North Yorkshire Council is the lead Authority of the Environment Agency funded Cell One Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. Under the option of Do-Minimum, North Yorkshire Council will continue to monitor coastal change from the ongoing Cell One Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme to inform the likely remaining life span of the properties. The cost of this option would be minimal because the monitoring data is funded and so only RMA staff time for reviewing timescales would be required. However, this option poses the same risks as the Do-Nothing option in terms of community preparedness, and increased costs to the RMAs for dealing with the issue as the properties become at imminent risk of loss.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The grant is for £90,000 to deliver a Coastal Adaptation Plan for Flat Cliffs. The project costs, including NYC staff time and consultant fees, will be fully funded through Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy. No match funding would be required from NYC, although there is the possibility of utilising some budget held by Planning that is forecast towards CCMAs. The potential for joint working and delivering efficiencies will be discussed on project inception.
- 5.2 The terms and conditions of the grant will be reviewed by NYC; this will include the financial years in which the grant must be spent and any clawback arrangements. The decision to accept the grant is subject to appropriate terms and conditions being received.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council is a Coast Protection Authority and has discretionary powers to carry out coast protection work inside the authority's area if the authority thinks the work desirable having regard to the national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategies under sections 7 and 8 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the purpose of the work is to manage a coastal erosion risk, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, in the authority's district.
- 6.2 The Council also has a general power of competence pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 which enable the authority to promote the well-being of their area and inhabitants and develop community strategies, together with other local bodies, for this purpose.

6.3 A specialist consultant will be procured in accordance with procurement legislation as well as the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules and appointed on suitable terms and conditions.

7.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No equalities implications will arise from this report, however, consideration of equality impacts is an ongoing duty and will be considered throughout the development of the coastal adaptation plan.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The project will proactively engage with the community and affected parties in planning for change in the future. A key avoidance action will be considering the integration of a Coastal Change Management Area into the Local Plan to safeguard land within Filey Bay that may be subject to future coastal erosion risk from development. The project will form a key part of NYC's emerging Climate Adaptation Strategy as nowhere are the effects of climate change felt more acutely than on the coast.

9.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 As Risk Management Authority, North Yorkshire Council, under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, is required to act in a manner that is consistent with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England and work collaboratively with other RMAs. Climate resilient places and communities that are ready to adapt to flooding and coastal change are at the core of the Strategy. The plan aims to discharge our responsibilities as RMA and work with other stakeholders in supporting the affected community to plan and adapt to coastal change. The Coastal Adaptation Plan and potential for a Coastal Change Management Area will form a key part of the emerging NYC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

10.1 That the Chief Financial Officer, sub-delegated to the Assistant Director – Resources (Environment), in consultation with the Corporate Director – Environment agrees to the Council accepting £90,000 from the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy to produce a Coastal Adaptation Plan for Flat Cliffs, subject to appropriate terms and conditions being received.

10.2

Following acceptance of the grant, a consultant specialising in coastal services is procured to provide technical support in producing the coastal adaptation plan and the consideration of establishing a Coastal Change Management Area within the wider Filey Bay.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping Two (NCERM2) Coastal Erosion Projections

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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7 August 2025

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Presenter of Report – Stewart Rowe, Principal Coastal Office

National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping 2 (NCERM2) Coastal Erosion Projections

The Environment Agency has a duty to update their understanding of current and future flood and coastal erosion risk as part of our statutory 'strategic overview' role for all sources of flood and coastal erosion risk. This is described in the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act.

The EA have spent the last 4 years working with coastal local authorities across England to develop the second iteration of a National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM). They use the best available data, information and modelling from both the Environment Agency and local authorities. For the first time the data is displayed through lines on maps which are available on gov.uk for open access to the public.

The below screenshots from the gov.uk website show erosion maps for Flat Cliffs at 2 time periods with the Shoreline Management Plan delivered:

- Medium term to the year 2055
- Long term to the year 2105

Erosion risk zones are shown for three climate change scenarios:

- Present Day (2020) –uses historical erosion rates to provide future projections without calculating any additional impacts of climate change and rising sea levels. The year 2020 is taken as the baseline year for the erosion projections.
- Climate Change Higher Central –uses sea level rise data from 70th percentile UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18) Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 climate projection.
- Climate Change Upper End –uses sea level rise data from 95th percentile UKCP18 Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 climate projection.

The map does not show the area of land that will definitely be lost to erosion. The absolute extent of future erosion could lie anywhere within the risk zone, or in extreme cases beyond it. The rate of erosion can be highly variable. It may be relatively consistent over time or could involve periods of faster or sudden erosion. Due to the complexity of predicting the location, timing and extent of erosion events, it is possible for the projections shown on the map to be exceeded.






Flat Cliffs 2055



Legend



Coastal erosion risk projections

-  Shoreline Management Plan Delivered, Present Day Climate (2020 data), 2055
-  Shoreline Management Plan Delivered, Climate Change (Higher Central), 2055
-  Shoreline Management Plan Delivered, Climate Change (Upper End), 2055
-  Flood frontage
-  Erosion Feature Line






Flat Cliffs 2105



Legend



Coastal erosion risk projections

-  Shoreline Management Plan Delivered, Present Day Climate (2020 data), 2105
-  Shoreline Management Plan Delivered, Climate Change (Higher Central), 2105
-  Shoreline Management Plan Delivered, Climate Change (Upper End), 2105
-  Flood frontage
-  Erosion Feature Line

The area at risk of coastal erosion is shown in metres measured from the position of the coast in 2020 (the red erosion feature line).

Shoreline Management Plan Delivered

	2055	2105
Present Day Climate (2020 data)	7m	16m
Climate Change (Higher Central)	11m	35m
Climate Change (Upper End)	12m	40m

No Future Intervention

	2055	2105
Present Day Climate (2020 data)	7m	16m
Climate Change (Higher Central)	11m	35m
Climate Change (Upper End)	12m	40m

The 'Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) delivered' scenario means the coastal erosion risk assuming the SMP management approach is followed. The 'No future intervention' scenario means the coastal erosion risk with no future investment in building or maintaining coastal defences. Note for this frontage the SMP policy is to not intervene and therefore the figures are identical.

The effect of climate change on coastal erosion is provided in the 'Higher Central' and 'Upper End' projections in the table and on the map. They use the UK Climate Projections Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 (RCP8.5) 70th percentile (Higher Central) and 95th percentile (Upper End) sea level rise projections.