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i) Councillor Dark proposed Notice of Motion (15/23), seconded by Councillor Joyce.

“This council recognises the very real threat posed by coastal erosion and sea intrusion to human life and our historic coastal communities, vital tourist industry, important farming industry and wildlife.

We applaud the recent decision taken at the County Council that as a county Norfolk will now press the Environment Agency, government and local MPs strongly to find and invest sufficient funding to cater for the current level of threat posed and to enhance provision for future years so that coastal defences are up to the task.

In support of this we now instruct this administration to write to the Environment Agency and relevant Ministers as a matter of urgency, with follow up engagement, to the effect that West Norfolk unequivocally stands alongside Norfolk County Council on this matter on behalf of its residents and that ‘managed retreat’ from existing coastal protections, allowing any loss of land to the sea or elements is not an acceptable short, medium or longer-term strategy or tactic.”

In proposing the Motion he referred to a briefing from the Environment Agency where they reported that they were reviewing their commitment to sea defences along the coast including not carrying out the beach recharge which they had previously highlighted the risk of flooding.

He drew attention to NCC stance objecting to the stance of the Environment Agency’s managed retreat of the flood defences and encouraged the Council to support their action.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Joyce reminded members that the Conservative Government had slashed the Environment Agency budgets he spoke in supporting the motion and the fact that the recharges should be carried out. He drew attention to the Shoreline Management Plan urged council not to turn the back on the area.

Councillor Sandell proposed the following amendment to the third paragraph of the Motion, this was seconded by Councillor Jamieson:

“Council on this matter on behalf of its residents and that ‘managed retreat’ from existing coastal protections, allowing any (NB) **increased risk to life or property, or** loss of land to the sea or elements is not a **desirable** short, medium or longer-term strategy or tactic and **the matter of potential changes to shoreline management should now be referred to E&C’.**”

Councillor Dark and Joyce accepted the amendment, which then became the substantive motion. Councillor Joyce asked if the Leader would write the letters and ensure councillors saw the letters before they were sent out.

Under standing order 14.6 Councillor Parish proposed the matter be referred to the Environment and Community Panel. This was seconded by Councillor Moriarty. Councillor Parish confirmed he was prepared to write the letters which he was happy for councillors Dark and Joyce to co-sign. He explained that as it was a complex matter it required more detail and support before taking a decision on the matter.

Councillor Long explained that he was not supportive of the proposal to refer to the Panel as the Council hadn’t seen the proposals for the changes to the Shoreline Management Plan. He referred to his previous involvement in the Plan. He explained that the Councils would

be asked to accept proposed revisions to the Plan in January. He considered the work would have to be re-done at that stage. He had attended a meeting on the issue that day, and expressed that it was vital to get things right procedurally. He waited to see the amended Shoreline Management Plan, and did not want to see it disappear.

Councillor Dark commented that the Motion had been submitted following a comment from the Leader and concern from parishes. He wanted to be able to support parishes. He wanted the chamber to say that it was going there and the Council would be engaging the Environment Agency.

Councillor Rust referred to the point raised by Councillor Long and that it should not be rushed and should therefore go to the Panel for full consideration, dependent on the Environment Agency report.

Councillor de Whalley drew attention to the underlying cause of sea level rise, and the need for an informed debate on flood defences when the documentation was available.

Councillor Beales commented that the issues were of importance, but the Notice of Motion was not the right way to go. Councillor Long and Dark cautioned against haste, therefore the referral to the Panel was a clear action, for a matter that was a complex area of policy for the council. He considered it was right to refer it to the Panel and hoped Councillor Long would bring his knowledge of the matter to that forum.

Councillor Squire referred to the fact that the proposer and seconder had not discussed it with her as portfolio holder when she had offered to do a briefing for all councillors at earlier meetings. She also re-iterated that the Council was talking to the Environment Agency and other agencies about the coastline regularly, she considered it should go to the Environment and Community Panel for consideration, but that the Council was not a decision maker.

Councillor Dark as a point of clarification stated he did not insinuate the portfolio holder or officers were not working but it related to the statement from the Leader.

Councillor Squire confirmed she had spoken to Councillor Long and Kunes on the matter.

Councillor Kemp commented that the Leader should write to the Environment Agency as in a high level flood would affect a large number of properties.

Councillor Colwell supported the referral to the Panel. He considered Councillor Dark was whipping up unnecessary fear in the villages.

In summing up Councillor Parish confirmed he had replied to parishes to confirm he would write to the agency, but reminded members that this was about facts he had reported from the Environment Agency. He suggested that future work of the Local Plan Task Group could involve looking at potential land for the future use if the sea levels rose considerably.

The proposal to refer the amended motion to the Environment and Community Panel put to the vote.

RESOLVED: That the amended motion below be referred to the Environment and Community Panel:

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We applaud the recent decision taken at the County Council that as a county Norfolk will now press the Environment Agency, government and local MPs strongly to find and invest sufficient funding to cater for the current level of threat posed and to enhance provision for future years so that coastal defences are up to the task.

Council on this matter on behalf of its residents and that 'managed retreat' from existing coastal protections, allowing any (NB) increased risk to life or property, or loss of land to the sea or elements is not a desirable short, medium or longer-term strategy or tactic and the matter of potential changes to shoreline management should now be referred to E&C'."