

**DRAFT Response based on input from the Southwold and Reydon Society and Blyth Estuary Group.**

To: [kerry.blair@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:kerry.blair@eastsoffolk.gov.uk)

Head of Operations  
East Suffolk Council  
(By email only)

11 June 2020

Dear Mr Blair,

REF: SHMC June 2020

The Walberswick Parish Council welcomes the current proposals for the Skills needed by the Southwold Harbour Management Committee and the Terms of Reference for its Advisory Group. These follow on well from the agreed remit of the Harbour Management Committee (HMC) and we urge that the new arrangements are put in place as soon as possible to allow the development of a robust business plan, funding strategy and scheme for the long term maintenance of both the estuary and harbour. We wish to make the following specific points related to the current proposals. We believe that these suggestions are aligned with other local councils and organisations including the Southwold and Reydon Society, the Blyth Estuary Group, and the Councils in Southwold and Reydon.

1. A priority should be the work on a Harbour Revision Order (HRO) to enable the new HMC to support and fund upstream works (at least to the A12) to ensure the maintenance of the estuary and its tidal flows to secure the continued future of the harbour. The HRO must also maintain the requirement that all income from the harbour and its associated lands, including the caravan site, must be ring-fenced for use in the harbour and estuary.
2. All structures and planning for the management of the harbour and estuary must remain fully in line with the national standards set out in the Ports Good Governance Guidance which ensure that all decisions are made in the best interests of the harbour and the communities it serves.
3. The HMC, as a whole, must fully cover the required skills. To achieve this East Suffolk Council should be willing to appoint non-Cabinet members, or even non-councillors, as their 5 members and that each appointment should be on the basis of possession of one or more of the required skills, which should be published as part of the process (e.g. in the report to Cabinet proposing the individuals to be on the HMC).
4. That the Advisory Group (AG) must have real influence and that its advice and recommendations must be fully taken into account by the HMC and clear reasons given for any decisions made against advice from the AG.

5. A clear strategy for fundraising must be part of the HMC's business plan with consideration given to establishing a charitable arm able to receive grants from bodies only able to support a charity. This may be essential to raise funds for upstream works (ie the river walls).
6. The skills matrix may need to change over time. Initial tasks such as business planning, drawing up proposals for the HRO, developing a funding strategy are essential and require strategic business and local government experience. Later stages of developing and implementing improvements and capital works will require more operational skills.
7. In order to include all stakeholders the proposed size of the Advisory Group is quite large. Given this, we think that its ToR should allow for it to have an executive committee to undertake specific tasks, reporting back to the full Group before making recommendations to the HMC.

The Walberswick Parish Council approved this submission at its meeting of 11 June 2020. We hope that the East Suffolk Council will find these comments helpful and be able to take them into account in its decisions on these proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Knight  
Clerk, Walberswick Parish Council