Southwold Coastal Protection Scheme

The works were undertaken by Team Van Oord (as Lead) on the coastal frontage at Southwold and comprised the construction of rock and timber groynes; the refurbishment of the promenade and beach nourishment. A flood embankment was also constructed to defend Southwold from ‘back-door’ flooding from the nearby Blythe estuary. Disruption to stakeholders, including local residents and businesses, was minimised by undertaking the works along the coastal frontage during the winter and spring months. Undertaking the works during these months proved challenging due to the poor weather conditions and low beach levels. The impacts of this were mitigated by the proactive planning of sea delivery of rock (approximately 16,000t) and sand (76,000m³) and tidally dependent work activities; and the provision of temporary roads to provide safe access along the beach to the working areas. Sensitive areas of coastal grassland were protected throughout the duration of the project. Environmental toolbox talks were given by a specifically appointed Environmental Clerk of Works, who also carried out routine site inspections and ensured compliance with the Project’s Environmental Action Plan. The construction programme was planned to minimise disruption to local businesses, in particular those on the adjacent promenade. Priority was given to construction activities where their completion would enable partial opening of the working area for access to the public and businesses. Proactive communication was crucial to achieving the aims of the Project whilst accommodating the needs of the local community.

Client
Environment Agency
Principal Contractor
Team Van Oord
Duration
144 weeks
Value
£6.3m
Scope
Construction of rock and timber groynes; refurbishment of promenade and beach nourishment
Southwold Coastal Protection Scheme

Extent of work carried out by in-house resources
Provision and erection of timber and rock groynes; dredging and placement of beach material; construction of reinforced concrete access steps and hand railing, provision and erection of groyne navigation markets, recovery and reuse in the works of rock buried; removal of existing timber/steel groynes; reinforced concrete repair to promenade

Extent of work carried out by sub-contractors
Rock supply, earthworks, supply of material for beach recharge.

Details of successes and lessons learnt on the commission (inc. sustainability benefits)
Having two clients on a contract caused conflict at times as different objectives, this required strong Project Management.

Value that you added to the project (e.g. innovation, cost and time efficiencies)
This was undertaken for the Environment Agency in collaboration with Waveney District Council. This partnering approach ensured that two adjacent frontages were protected against the risk of flooding and coastal erosion under one Contract, creating significant cost savings.