

# North norfolk coast protection



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

**Aim:**

My aim of this project is to answer the following question:

Should the North Norfolk Coast be protected at any cost? Or should nature be allowed to take its course?

Norfolk is a low lying county which is very prone to erosion. The coastline is around 100 miles stretching from Hopton on Sea to Wash. The North Norfolk coastline stretches over 40 miles, covering 450 square kilometres.

To aid this project, from the 13th – 15th May 2009, I visited North Norfolk, to collect data and explore the coast. At the centre, I was given worksheets to fill in and I worked in a group and as an individual to collect this data. Areas in Norfolk that I visited include: Cley Next the Sea, Sheringham, Cromer, West Runton and Overstrand.

**Norfolk:**

The name comes from the Anglo-Saxon for North folk; hence Suffolk (which is South of Norfolk) derives from the Anglo-Saxon for South folk. Norfolk is situated in East England. To its West are the borders of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire (also to the Southwest). Norfolk is split up into 7 boroughs, with Norwich as the biggest (population wise). Norwich was once the second largest city in England in the 16th Century, however the Great Plague of London in 1665 killed around a third of the population. The total population of Norfolk is around 850, 000 people. According to 2007 estimation, the population for North Norfolk is 100, 800 people.

Norfolk is the largest county in East Anglia but it is the least populated too. Norfolk is also a county without a motorway – it relies on the A roads which connect to places such as Cambridge and the railway. The closest airport is Norwich International Airport – this offers flights to Amsterdam and from there many interchange for other World destinations. Norfolk's main highlights for tourists are its coastline, beaches and the historical city of Norwich.

North Norfolk District was formed on April 1st 1974 and was originally named Pastonacres. North Norfolk covers 994 square kilometres and has a population of 98, 382 along with 43, 502 households according to the 2001 census.

Over 20% of the people living in Norfolk work in the food industry or agriculture – this is due to the land (which is low lying) being fertile and changed into arable land. The arable land often grows wheat, barley and sugar beet. Norfolk's GDP made up 1. 5% of England's economy in 1998.

The UK average and Norfolk has an apparent contrast. Most of Norfolk's population is over the age of 50 whilst the UK average population consists of more people between the ages of 25 – 40.

North Norfolk also contains a lot of areas which are SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) including Cley's Freshwater Marsh (owned by the NWT (Norfolk Wildlife Trust)) and the geology in West Runton.

There is some information about the areas where I visited with my school on the trip to North Norfolk.

**Role in this project:**

I've decided to take on the role as the North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) and I will be assessing the current coastal management in North Norfolk and exploring the issues that will arise.

The NNDC pays 45% for the coastal defences whilst DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) pays the rest (55%) although DEFRA can pay up to 75%. The NNDC maintains the coastal defences whilst the Environment Agency has the Strategic Overview of the entire coast and is responsible for the floods and both should not be mixed into being responsible for the other as they are easily mixed up. The Council prepares the Coastal Management Plans (CMPs) to assess the impacts on the damages due to coastal change and the Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) which address the basics of coastal defence.

**Key Questions:**

With the viewpoint of being the North Norfolk Council, I've decided on the following questions:

- Why is the North Norfolk Coast so vulnerable to erosion?
- Which areas in North Norfolk are at the greatest risk of coastal erosion?  
Why?
- What are the effects of the coastal defences in North Norfolk?
- Is the current expenditure worthwhile in North Norfolk and what are the other options?

The above questions have been devised as my role assesses the current coastal management in North Norfolk. By devising these key questions and answering them, I hope use it to aid my conclusion to the aim of this project.