

Thérèse Coffey MP  
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**Our ref:** AMC/2020/8606

**Your ref** TC97191

**Date:** 27 October 2020

Dear Thérèse,

### **Road failure B1127**

Thank you for your email of 23 October 2020.

We have been managing the main river outfall to the sea at Easton Broad for several decades by the use of plant excavating the beach, channel and outfall. Machinery, for this purpose, has been permanently located at this site. This section of coast, which is otherwise undefended, has been subjected to ongoing average coastal erosion of a rate 2 to 3 metres per year.

Recent coastal weather events have resulted in a spike in erosion rates which has rendered the Easton Broad outfall infrastructure inoperable due to exposure by outflanking. During the normal operation of the outfall structure the B1127 road and the marshes were subjected to frequent flooding for periods of time during winter months. The loss of the structure has led to increased duration of flood events which has had an impact on road users and may eventually impact the designated features of the site upstream of Potters Bridge. No homes or properties are located within the floodable area.

We manage this site to help control water levels on Easton Broad as consistent levels are critical to the status of the protected environmental features of the site which are principally breeding birds in the spring and summer months from February onwards. We appreciate the work also benefits the road by reducing the length of time water is on the road. However, the road will still be regularly subject to fresh and seawater flooding as it is low lying and undefended. Any measures necessary to manage the road are the responsibility of Suffolk County Council Highways. This includes maintenance and signage along with any decisions that need to be made on the future of the road. We have had several discussions on this.

We are currently on site and have successfully drained the site through the construction of an outflow over the beach. The marshes are drained and the road is currently dry. We have placed temporary warning signs for beach users advising them that passage past Easton Broad may not be possible. In the near future we plan to construct a footbridge over the channel (subject to consents) to reinstate full access over the site during times when the site is draining. We will also remove the old, redundant outfall which is now on the beach. We will continue to maintain the outflow for the foreseeable future

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We worked closely with Natural England to ensure that we comply with the relevant conservation legislation. To date we have successfully compensated for all the protected features on Easton Marsh seaward of Potters Bridge. We continue to work closely with Natural England to find the best way forward for the remainder of the site considering its vulnerability to flooding and coastal change. This will mean that our work to drain the lower Easton Broad area is likely to cease at some point in the near future. We encourage all interested parties, including Suffolk County Highways, to work together to consider options for the medium term future of the road. We will of course be happy to advise partners on matters relating to flooding and coastal change. Any assistance you can offer in bringing parties together with this would be appreciated.

I trust this has answered the matters raised to your satisfaction. If I can be of further help in this, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. J. Hawkins".

**Simon Hawkins**  
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