



FOI/ EIR request – FOI317419571
Title: Lowestoft north beach oil deposits

Date received: 16/03/2021	Date closed: 09/04/2021
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Request

I am writing this in response to comments you made to XXXXXXX in an email on 26 February 2021.

There is a substantial amount of concern from local residents and community groups about the oil deposits being exposed on Lowestoft North Beach. These concerns have not been helped by:

- conflicting reports about how the authorities are going to deal with the problem. Initially the response was that the oil deposits were going to be removed. However, this was almost immediately reversed by council statements in the media. In a recent email to XXXXXXX it was stated that the deposits will be removed as they are exposed.
- there seems to be little information released by the council about these deposits. We have been told that Great Yarmouth Borough Council commissioned a report but we have not been given this report despite several requests.

Given the growing concern about the deposits and the authorities lack of information about the response I would like to know the following:

1. Is the extent, position and the amount of oil known. Are there any maps available of where the oil was moved to when the incident was initially dealt with.
2. Is all the oil now mixed with sand and gravel. Is there any evidence that the oil may disperse in large sticky clumps which may endanger birds and other wildlife through fouling.
3. What are the chemicals within the oil that are of most concern if dispersed into the environment e.g. aromatics. Has there been any analysis done on the current chemical composition of the oil.
4. What is the site to be monitored, when and how will the strategy be reviewed and how will that information be communicated to local residents
5. Has there been any review of other contaminated sites on the coast (e.g. old refuse tips) that may be in danger of being exposed through coastal erosion

Response

1, 2 and 3. In accordance with regulation 12 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 this response acts as a Refusal Notice.

Regulation 12(4) states that a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that -

(a) it does not hold information when an applicant's request is received.

4. With regard to the coastal erosion in Gunton, Coastal Partnership East the coastal management team for East Suffolk Council, are currently reviewing the coast from Corton and Gunton. As part of that review there will be community engagement into the findings and the next steps. We will of course keep you and others informed of those opportunities.

5. The data held by the Environment Agency shows no contaminated sites on the Suffolk coast that are at risk of erosion. However, there may be sites which pre-date 1937. We are aware of a potential site of this nature in Corton that was highlighted to us during the review of the coastal strategy. This site is not at erosion risk at this time.

It is important to note that we are in regular contact with the Environment Agency and they are fully aware of our actions and intentions.