30 Projects for 30 Years:
Southsea Coastal Scheme

Contractor:
VolkerStevin (in joint venture with Boskalis Westminster – VSBW)

Client:
Coastal Partners & Portsmouth City Council

Value of project:
c. £185 million+

The Southsea Coastal Scheme is the UK's largest local authority-led coastal defence project, delivering 4.5km of new flood and coastal erosion protection along Portsmouth's seafront.

Delivered by VolkerStevin and Boskalis Westminster (VSBW), the scheme is safeguarding more than 10,000 homes, over 700 businesses and a range of nationally significant heritage assets from the growing risks posed by climate change and sea level rise. Constructed across six separate frontages, the project includes new seawalls, steel sheet piled flood defences, rock revetments and raised promenades, alongside significant public realm improvements designed to enhance accessibility and the visitor experience.

The project has required innovative engineering and careful planning to overcome the challenges of working within a live coastal environment, maintaining public access while operating within tidal constraints and in close proximity to historic structures and environmentally sensitive areas. Delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic added further complexity, requiring extensive collaboration and digital working practices to maintain programme performance.

As well as improving resilience, the scheme is helping to transform Portsmouth's seafront. New public spaces, cycle routes and enhanced promenades are supporting regeneration, tourism and economic growth while creating lasting benefits for local communities.

Sustainability has been a key focus throughout delivery. Value-engineered solutions, material reuse and on-site processing have generated approximately £4 million in savings, reduced carbon emissions by around 4,000 tonnes and avoided an estimated 25,000 lorry movements. The project has also delivered significant social value through STEM engagement, careers activities and partnerships with local schools, colleges and community organisations.

The Southsea Coastal Scheme demonstrates the vital contribution CECA members make in delivering resilient infrastructure that protects communities, supports economic growth and helps the UK adapt to the challenges of a changing climate.



