

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLANS IN THE ANGLIAN REGION

“The vehicle for long term sustainable management of our coast”



SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN BOUNDARIES

- 2(c) Donna Nook to Gibraltar Point
- 2(d) Gibraltar Point to Snettisham
- 3(a) Snettisham to Sheringham
- 3(b) Sheringham to Lowestoft
- 3(c) Lowestoft to Harwich
- 3(d) Harwich to Mardyke (R. Thames)
- Areas below highest recorded tide level



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The need for a strategic approach and its delivery via the production of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs)

Shoreline Management Plans and Planning Legislation

Recognising potential conflict and the need for partnership

There is a recognition by those responsible for defending the coast from flooding and erosion and by local people who live and work on the coast, that our coast is a living and moving shoreline. Weather, wind and tide are continually changing its shape as vast quantities of sand, shingle and silt are moved to and fro. In this moving and fragile environment, man-made coastal flood and erosion protection measures can alter and interfere with the natural process of sediment movement. The result can be protection in one area at the cost of erosion in another. A strategic approach, which builds on our knowledge of coastal processes and considers the coastline as one, is vital to avoid piecemeal attempts to protect one area at the expense of another. SMPs are intended to provide the vehicle for the long term, sustainable protection of our coastline.

SMPs are voluntary and not backed by any legal or statutory requirement. They bring together information on coastal flooding and erosion, coastal processes and human and environmental needs and uses. They also draw on, and take account of, current local and structure plans, produced by the district and borough councils and the county councils, and provide essential feedback at the review stages of such plans. With the prediction of global warming and sea level rise, local and structure plans will increasingly need to take account of strategic coastal defence recommendations from SMPs.

To those who live and work on the coast it provides a unique community and livelihood which supports farming, fishing, recreation, tourism and commerce. To those who visit, for the day or on holiday, it is a place of landscape, wildlife and recreation. This wide range of interests can cause conflict and opposing claims on the coast. Partnership and the involvement of all interests helps us to identify differences and make the right decision in the interests of the coast. SMPs are part of a national initiative on the future planning for our coastline, backed by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF), Association of District Councils, English Nature and the Environment Agency.



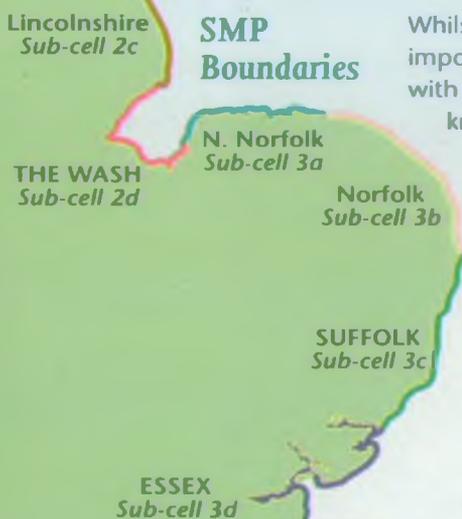
The objectives of SMPs are to -

- improve our understanding of coastal processes
- work in partnership with all interests and organisations
- prepare an agreed framework for long term planning of coastal defences.

SMPs will be updated from time to time to take account of new ideas and information.

Whilst it is essential that we consider our coastline as one "living coast", it would be physically impossible to prepare one plan for the entire length of coastline. Fortunately, nature provides us with convenient methods of sub dividing the coast into manageable lengths. Using our knowledge of coastal processes and having regard to existing land use, we have identified lengths of coast that are reasonably self-contained in terms of net sediment transport.

These lengths are "sub-cells" within the main coastal sediment cells. A Shoreline Management Plan covers each sub cell along the Anglian coastline, as shown opposite.



THE ESSEX SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Sub Cell 3d



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Overview

The study area covers some 440km of "coastline" that includes both tidal regimes within six estuaries, together with open coast from Harwich (including the south bank of the River Stour), to Mardyke in the Thames Estuary. With the exception of the Tendring Peninsular and the north bank of the River Thames, the coastal frontage is predominantly rural, incorporating nationally and internationally recognised wildlife and conservation sites. Interspersed with such sites, important tourism and recreational interests along the coastline and estuaries complement the more traditional seaside resorts such as Clacton on Sea and Southend on Sea.



The coast line is characterised by an eroding or "drowned" foreshore and a shoreline which is artificial in nature due to extensive reclamation of saltmarshes during the period 1650 to 1850. Much of the coastline is low-lying and protected by earth flood embankments with sea facing revetment works. A combination of sea level rise, increased storminess and land tilt is exerting unique and unrelenting pressures on this stretch of coastline. Essex incorporates an extremely important resource in terms of the natural environment and is particularly well known for its coastal marshes, its natural salt marshes currently being among the most extensive in the Country.

Management Units

The length of coastline covered by this Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) has been sub divided into individual "Management Units" in order to establish discrete frontages over which sustainable coastal defence policies can be applied. A Management Unit can be described as "a length of shoreline with coherent characteristics in terms of both natural coastal processes and land use".

General Management Objectives

As well as specific objectives, identified on a local basis, the recommended strategic option for each Management Unit should:-

- Be sustainable, in terms of economic viability, technical feasibility and have full regard to relevant environmental factors.
- Be compatible with the coastal processes affecting both the Management Unit itself, and adjacent stretches of coastline.

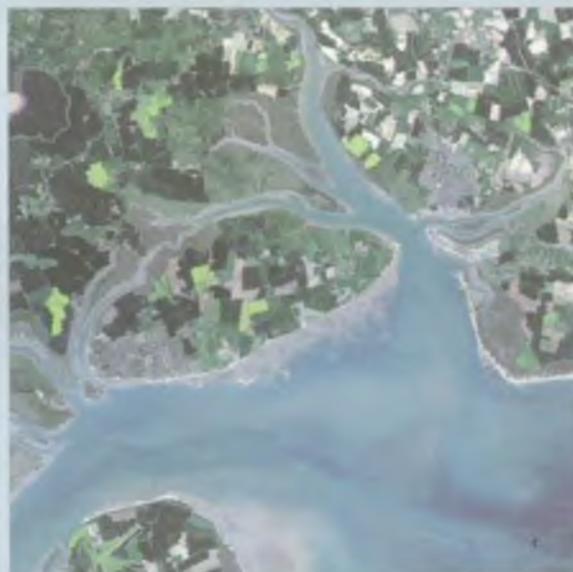
Recommended Strategic Options

The following strategic Management Unit policies have been adopted following wide ranging consultation, together with full consideration of both specific and general objectives throughout the SMP Sub Cell.

"Do Nothing" (this entails no coastal defence activity apart from undertaking safety measures): Management Unit 9 (part).

"Hold the Line", (namely, by intervention, hold the existing line in its present location): Management Units 1, 7, 9 (part).

(Note: A medium term (10 years), "Hold the Line" policy has been adopted for Management Units 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 (part). In the longer term, a combination of "Hold the Line" and "Managed Retreat" (in selective locations) is recommended within individual Management Units with future decisions based on additional monitoring, modelling and economic evaluation to ensure sustainable defence policies).



Land use (satellite image) - Mersea Island

Plan Adoption by Coastal Partners

SMPs are "living documents for a living coastline". This SMP was adopted by the Coastal Partners in January 1997 and is anticipated to be the definitive framework for coastal planning for approximately five years. Thereafter, a Plan Review will be undertaken to take account of new study information availability on coastal process, global warming/sea level rise and associated planning considerations.

The principal Coastal Partners include the Environment Agency, Maldon District Council, Rochford District Council, Southend on Sea Borough Council, English Nature and Tendring District Council (the "Lead Authority").



The major considerations in an SMP include

- Coastal Processes - an understanding of how nature drives the waves, tides and sediment.
- Coastal Defences - where they are and how effective they are in protecting people and property.
- Land Use - the type of use, such as residential, agricultural or industrial and its economic value.
- Natural Environment - the kind of environment, landscape and habitat and their relative importance.



SMP Coastal Defence Options (Either)

- Hold the line (maintain or improve the existing defence)
- Advance the existing defence line (seaward to a new location)
- Managed retreat (move the existing defence line landward, in a controlled manner)
- Do nothing (except for safety considerations).

The recommended option for individual lengths of coast are jointly agreed by the partner organisations following public consultation and having full regard to the above considerations.



SMPs and their Role in Connection with Coastal Flooding and Erosion Responsibilities

The organisation responsible for flood protection of low lying land is the Environment Agency. The local district or borough council is responsible for protection against coastal erosion of higher ground. The Environment Agency and the local councils are the principal partners to SMP production, thus ensuring that the strategic framework and decisions from SMPs are adopted into each organisation's plans for individual coastal frontages. One of the partners took the lead role in producing the SMP, in liaison with the other partners and is referred to as the "Lead Authority".

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Shoreline Management Plans
"Living Plans for a Living Coast"

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For general enquiries please call your local Environment Agency office. If you are unsure who to contact, or which is your local office, please call our general enquiry line.

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
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0645 333 111**

The 24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all environmental incidents relating to air, land and water.

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