



SHORELINE, FLOOD AND COASTAL DEFENCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

These plans may provide opportunities as well as concern for recreational boating. They are currently being revised and consulted on. This document explains how we can engage in the process.

Shoreline, flood and coastal defence management plans provide a framework for coastal defence and flood management outlining in broad terms how the coastline should be managed in future. They are non statutory documents that suggest an approach to managing the risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment from coastal erosion and flooding.

We are all aware that the coast is a dynamic environment evolving naturally through coastal erosion, accretion and flooding processes. The coast is also an economic and social asset for businesses, housing, tourism and recreational activities. Development on the coast has led to the necessity to protect some coastal developments through engineering solutions. It is estimated that 10 % of the population currently live in areas potentially at risk¹.

Continued pressure on space at the coast for new developments, coupled with the potential effects of climate change and sea level rise will all increase these risks in the future. Together these plans aim to present a long term strategic approach to manage erosion and flood risk and outline an approach for the future management of the coastline.

Who is responsible for managing coastal flooding?

Coastal protection and coastal flood defence are devolved issues, governed primarily through the Coast Protection Act 1949, but also the Water Resources

Act 1991 and Land Drainage Act 1991 and Water Act 2003 in England and Wales and Flood Defence (Scotland) Act 1961 and Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997 in Scotland.

Defra has overall responsibility in England and funds most of the Environment Agency's flood management activities and provides grant aid on a project basis to the operating authorities to support their investment in flood and coastal protection. The Welsh Assembly Government provides a similar role in Wales, with responsibility for policy on flood and coastal defence.

Central guidance on flood policy and good practice is limited in Scotland compared to England and Wales reflecting the lower level of coastal flooding in Scotland. This lower level is mainly due to the different topography of Scotland compared to many parts of England and Wales. However the Scottish Executive does grant aid coastal protection schemes proposed by Local Authorities. In addition the Scottish Executive, SNH and SEPA fund research to improve flood management.

Government Strategy

Making Space for Water² was the Government's consultation seeking views on a range of flood and coastal erosion risk management issues for England. In the Government's response to the consultation published in March 2005³, Defra outlined a revised vision for the

² Defra (2004) *Making space for water: developing a new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England: a consultation exercise*. Available at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waterspace/consultation.pdf

³ Defra (2005) *Making space for water: taking forward a new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England*. Available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/strategy/1stres.pdf>

¹ Local Authority Coastal Risk Management: information pack. (2004)



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strategy. Of importance to RYA, the vision outlines:

- greater focus on stakeholder involvement and participation
- greater emphasis on solutions that work with natural processes for example, the appropriate use of multi functional wetlands that provide wildlife and recreational resource and reduce coastal squeeze on habitats like saltmarsh.

The report also recognises that sites of designated environmental importance will usually also have other benefits, for example recreational and/or property interests, which will be considered in deciding on the management action. Operating authorities will need to increase their awareness of these recreational assets and this is one area where local participation is vital.

Developing Shoreline Management Plans

The Government has encouraged the formulation of voluntary Regional Coastal Groups made up primarily of the ‘operating authorities’; maritime district councils, Environment Agency and internal drainage boards to develop SMPs. In Scotland, primary responsibility for coastal defence lies with the landowner, subject to approval from the relevant Local Authority.

A Regional Coastal Group is defined by its geographical boundary based on sediment movement rather than administrative. At present there are 17 coastal groups covering England and Wales.

The establishment of Regional Coastal Groups has allowed a more co-ordinated approach to coastal defence at both a regional and local level and enables strategic management within the sediment cells or sub-cells.

How are SMPs implemented?

SMPs outline the policy and preferred option for each coastal cell and have the following objectives:

<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To define the risks to people and the developed, historical and natural environment ▪ Identify preferred policies for managing those risks over the next 100 years ▪ Identify consequences of implementing policies ▪ Set out procedures for monitoring ▪ Inform stakeholders of risk ▪ Ensure that future land use and development takes account of the risks and preferred policies

Box 1: SMP Objectives

Coastal cells are divided further into management units. Each management unit has its own distinct character and is assessed on which of the 4 basic policy options (defined by Defra) is preferred, taking into account and balancing the needs of the local community and the environment. This process requires an understanding of economic and social objectives, as well as environmental issues affecting where future development can be planned.

<p>Policy options</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold the line - maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by coastal defences 2. Advance the line – build new defences seaward of the existing defence line 3. Managed realignment - allow retreat of the shoreline inland and identify a new line of coastal defences and where appropriate construct new defences landward of the original defences 4. No active intervention – a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining any defences.
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Box 2: Policy Options

Once the SMP has been approved, following a period of stakeholder consultation, strategy plans are developed to implement the detail and

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identify the most appropriate coastal engineering schemes in line with the policy in accordance with Defra guidance.

SMP2 Review

The original SMPs were developed over a period between 1996 and 1999. Defra produced 'Shoreline Management Plans, A guide for coastal defence authorities' in June 2001. The document provides the requirements of the stage 2 SMPs (known as SMP2s) including a review of the first SMPs, their strengths and weaknesses and highlights various issues that need to be addressed in the next SMP review.

Regional Coastal Groups are beginning the preparation of SMP2s to give a guide for the management of the coast for the next 100 yrs.

3 pilot areas have already undergone a period of review and consultation for:

- Dover Harbour to Beachy Head,
- Beachy Head to Selsey Bill and
- North Kelling to Lowestoft.

The remaining plans will be reviewed in 2005 and 2006.

The pilot SMP2s recognised that existing management practices may not be appropriate in the long term. Consequently, the SMP2s will need to provide a timeline for objectives, policy and management changes, which will provide a 'route map' for decision makers to move from the present situation towards the future. Objectives, policy setting and management requirements will be considered for three main epochs: 0-20 years, 20-50 years and 50-100 years.

The review of SMP2s will account for:

- Latest coastal studies and monitoring information
- Issues identified since original plan
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in National policy

Whilst SMP2s take account of other planning initiatives and legislative requirements and is intended to inform the wider strategic planning for the coast, it does not set anything other than coastal defence policies.

Estuary Strategies and uneconomic sea defences

There is no legal right to flood and coastal defence in England and Wales. In 2004 Defra clarified their policy towards the maintenance of uneconomic sea defences⁴. The policy includes guidance for considering investment decisions taking account of social and environmental benefits as well as economic benefits and how sea defences will be categorised (Box 3).

The EA is piloting a series of Essex and Suffolk Estuary strategies due for completion by 2007. The aim is to provide a better understanding of how future flood risk can be reduced in the face of such pressures such as sea level rise.

Sea defence categories

1. Defences where there is a clear economic case to continue maintenance
2. Defences that are required to protect internationally designated environmental features from the damaging effect of tidal flooding
3. Defences which do not fit into 1 or 2 but where work is justified because withdrawal of maintenance would cause an uncertain and unacceptable risk
4. Defences that do not fit 1,2 or 3.

Box 3: Sea defence categories

Flood Management Plans

The Environment Agency is currently undertaking a programme to produce Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) for the major river catchments.

⁴ Maintenance of uneconomic sea defences: a way forward:
Available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/policy/unecseadef.htm>

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A CFMP is a high-level strategic planning tool through which the EA will seek to work with other key decision-makers within a river catchment to identify and agree policies for sustainable flood risk management.

CFMPs will identify broad policies for the long term (up to 100 years) and assist future flood risk management planning. They will improve understanding of what factors influence floods and flood risk at the catchment scale. These policies will form the basis for development of Strategy Plans, which will identify in more detail appropriate flood defence measures.

Other Plans & Legislation

Planning Guidance (England)

Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 25 in principle provides an effective mechanism for ensuring flood risk is taken into account in the planning process, allied to effective flood resilience and mitigation measures where development goes ahead in flood risk areas. Under the new planning system, a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) will be consulted on to replace PPG 25.

Regional Spatial Plans and Local Development Frameworks will have to take account of this advice.

Planning Guidance (Wales)

In Wales, the planning framework is provided through the Wales Spatial Plan, Planning Guidance Wales and Technical Guidance Note (TAN) 15, Development and Flood Risk.

River Basin Management Plans

The main mechanism by which the Water Framework Directive will achieve its goals is by developing River Basin Management Plans.

Article 4(6) of the Directive acknowledges that extreme flood and

drought events can adversely affect the status (both quality and quantity) of water bodies. In order to minimise these risks and help water bodies achieve the requirements of the Directive, certain conditions need to be met including taking all practical steps to alleviate flooding and prevent further deterioration in status. Part of the requirements of the WFD is stakeholder consultation and involvement.

SAC and SPA Management Plans⁵

Single schemes of management are being developed for all European Marine Sites designated under the Habitats Regulations⁶. Any plans or projects affecting these sites must go through an assessment process to ensure there is no net loss to the site.

English Nature is represented on the SMP Regional Coastal Groups and is required to ensure that SMP2s comply with the requirements of the regulations. In Wales, The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) fulfils a similar role to English Nature.

The RYA has the opportunity to represent their interests through local involvement on advisory groups for SACs and SPAs.

⁵ SAC is a Special Area of Conservation designated under the European Habitats Directive. SPA is a Special Protection Area designated under the European Birds Directive.

⁶ The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 Statutory Instrument 1994 No. 2716



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Estuary management plans

In England, arising from an initiative by English Nature, Estuary Management Plans have been prepared by a project team which brings together all those with an interest in an estuary to reach a consensus of the sustainable use of that estuary. All the major estuaries in England have been covered, although some initiatives have been superseded by the SAC Management Schemes. All initiatives offer a valuable opportunity for recreational users to feed into the management strategy for the estuary.

Responding to consultations

Regional and local representation of recreational interests is going to be vital in the development of the management strategies for estuaries, coasts and inland waters. Whilst the RYA has produced guidance for Planning Authorities on requirements of the recreational boating sector⁷, and will continue to provide a strategic framework for the development of various plans and inform members of progress, RYA Regional Associations and affiliated clubs will be key to providing a local response.

Key Concerns

Concerns have been raised that recreational boating interests may not be represented and considered within the development of coastal defence and flood management plans and consequently facilities lost.

Managed retreat is one example where existing facilities and the access to water may be affected. Equally it may also provide an opportunity for new facilities or the relocation of facilities such as moorings, landing places and club houses.

Through action at the regional level we can ensure facilities are not lost or degraded. Access to the water is vital for the range of recreational activities that take place and should be built into any new scheme where boating takes place.

How to get involved

For the Shoreline Management Plans, a stakeholder engagement strategy will be planned by the relevant coastal group before work starts. RYA will inform coastal groups initially and request we are given the opportunity to represent our interests and act as a central coordination point to facilitate input by the Regional Associations. Consultation will be via documents and also through local presentations and exhibitions advertised locally.

Each Region should take stock of the facilities and level of activity within their region and the needs of recreational boaters including access to launch and landing sites from the water, sheltered waters for watersports and novices and direct access to the water and shore side facilities. The RYA Guidance and the response from Government to the *Making Space for Water* consultation support case for providing for recreational needs on the coast.

Local and regional members can ensure that the operating authorities for these plans recognise that water recreation is an integral part of the local waterside environment and should ensure that boating is not compromised by flooding or flood/coast protection measures.

⁷ Planning Guide for Boating (2004) British Marine Federation and Royal Yachting Association. Available from RYA.