

Shoreline Management Plan Adoption

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Allan Holliday
LEAD OFFICER: Jane Salt
REPORT AUTHOR: David Bechelli

WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS

The adoption of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) define the coastal defence policies for the Copeland coast and indicate which areas will be defended and which won't. Adoption will also demonstrate Copeland Borough Council's support of the Shoreline Management Plan.

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE?

A key decision is required to adopt the Revised Shoreline Management Plan by Executive to set out high level policies for the management of flood and coastal erosion risks to the Copeland Coast in a sustainable manner.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Copeland Borough Council adopts the revised North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) and the policies set out in it for the Copeland coastline.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Shoreline Management Plans

Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are part of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Planning Framework. SMPs set the long term policy for the management of the coastline and are taken forward through shoreline strategies, which subsequently will identify any schemes to deliver the policies.

A review of the Shoreline Management Plan commenced in 2008 and is now almost complete.

In accordance with the 2006 DEFRA guidance supported by WAG, SMP2 has been developed in stages. The guidance gives four possible policy options for each stretch of coast as follows:

- Hold the Line (HTL) – maintain the existing coastline position
- Advance the Line (ATL) – move the coastline seaward
- Managed Realignment (MR) – manage the movement of the coastline either landward or seaward
- No Active Intervention (NAI) – No significant public money put into management of the coastline

It should be noted that the delivery of the policies is subject to affordability.

The guidance also requires that the policies need to be assigned for a period of 100 years over three time epochs:

- Short term – 0-20 years
- Medium term – 20-50 years
- Long term – 50-100 years

1.2 Shoreline Management Plan Consultation

Following the public consultation, a number of policy changes were made from those in the draft SMP. Policy changes for the Copeland coast are summarised below:

- Duddon Estuary – The policy for the first epoch was changed from Managed Realignment to Hold the Line
- Silecroft (Hartrees Hill) – The policy for all three epochs was changed from No Active Intervention to Hold the Line (subject to private funding)
- Stubb Place and Eskmeals Dunes – The policy was changed from No Active Intervention to Managed Realignment
- Braystones, Nethertown and Coulderton – The policy in the first epoch was changed from No Active Intervention to Managed Realignment

The direct affect of these policy changes on Copeland Borough Council is minimal, as none of them commit the Council to provide any coastal defences. Policy changes in places have put more emphasis on the Council to look at adaptation policies and emergency plans for properties at risk.

Following the full public consultation, the consultant has written a consultation report documenting the comments made, the responses and any actions taken as a result. A copy of this can be found at:

www.mycoastline.org

1.3 Completion of the Shoreline Management Plan

The revised Shoreline Management Plan is almost complete and is currently undergoing Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The SMP2 Action Plan will be regularly reviewed by the North West and North Wales Coastal Group and updated where appropriate.

1.4 Habitats Regulation Assessment

As the UK has signed up to the European Habitats Directive, the revised Shoreline Management Plan has to undergo an assessment to determine the impact on European designate habitats. If there is likely to be an adverse impact on a European site, then SMP2 will need to go to the Secretary of State to be approved.

1.5 Implications for Copeland Borough Council

Implementation of the revised Shoreline Management Plan will have little direct impact on Copeland Borough Council in terms of coastal management, but is likely to have an impact in terms of updated spatial planning policies and emergency plans to deal with increased risk of coastal erosion and flooding.

Larges stretches of the Copeland coast are open and the SMP policy remains No Active Intervention in these areas. Many of the front line defences are the responsibility of Network Rail and as long as the Cumbrian coastal railway remains open, the policy is Hold the Line or No Active Intervention until the railway is threatened.

Copeland is responsible for coastal defence in a number of locations and where the policy remains Hold the Line, maintenance of such defences will continue subject to revenue funding. At Saltom Pit, the policy for the first two epochs is Hold the Line, but a caveat has been included stating that this is as long as it is technically feasible to do so or remains economic to do so.

1.6 Adoption of the Revised Shoreline Management Plan

The aim is that the Coastal Local Authorities along the North West England and North Wales Coast take the revised Shoreline Management Plan to their Executives in September 2010 for adoption.

In advance of general adoption, following the public consultation stage, Blackpool Council took SMP2 to their Executive on 21st July 2010 and had the Plan adopted. It should be noted that no changes in policy for the Blackpool coast were identified following public consultation.

Subsequently Sefton Council took adoption of SMP2 to Committee on 4th August 2010 and Cabinet on 5th August 2010, where it was adopted.

2. ARGUMENT

2.1 High Level Planning for Coastal Defences

Shoreline Management Plans are needed to provide high level policies for managing the risks to the coastline from coastal erosion and flooding in a sustainable manner. Justification for policies is based on a combination of social, economic and environmental consideration.

Without SMPs it would be left to individual authorities to produce policies for managing their own sections of the coastline. By developing plans that cover large stretches of the coast, a more consistent approach will be adopted.

2.2 Grant Funding for Studies, Strategies and Schemes

Initial considerations when assessing an application for grant funding for a study, strategy or scheme are “is it in the SMP?” and “has the Local Authority making the application adopted the SMP?”.

2.3 Local Development Framework

Shoreline Management Plans are used as evidence for Local Development Framework (LDF) and policies in the LDF should reflect the risks highlighted in the SMP.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

3.1 Adopt the Revised Shoreline Management Plan

Adoption of SMP2 will give Copeland Borough Council a tool to deliver sustainable flood and coastal erosion risk management over the long term and it will support any application for grant funding for any studies, strategies and schemes that may be needed to deliver sustainable flood and coastal erosion risk management.

3.2 Do not Adopt the Revised Shoreline Management Plan

If Copeland Borough Council does not adopt SMP2, it will jeopardise its ability to apply for grant funding for any studies, strategies and schemes that may be needed to deliver sustainable flood and coastal erosion risk management.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Recommendation that Copeland Borough Council Adopts the Revised Shoreline Management Plan

Shoreline Management Plans set out sustainable policies for managing the risks of coastal erosion and flooding and as such it is recommended that Executive adopt SMP2.

5. WHAT ARE THE LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS?

5.1 Legal Implications

Shoreline Management Plans are non-statutory documents and as such there are no legal implications.

5.2 Financial Implications

Shoreline Management Plans at a high level consider the sustainability of flood and coastal erosion risk management and economics are taken into account when developing policies. Although many actions are included in the SMP, it is understood that delivery of these actions is dependant upon funding being available. SMPs are also used to support applications for grant funding, but just because a study, strategy or scheme has been identified in the SMP, it does not guarantee that it will obtain grant funding, as the benefit to cost ratio may not be high enough, or in comparison with other schemes nationally, it may not be of high enough priority.

For Copeland Borough Council the effective result of SMP2 will be to continue to maintain existing defences from revenue budgets (£14,000 for the 2010/2011 financial year).

Identification of maintenance works is usually undertaken through the annual coastal defence inspections, which are undertaken as part of regional monitoring, which is grant funded.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

Dealing with the issues arising from the Shoreline Management Plan is part of the Flood and Coastal Defence Engineer's role, as was much of the work involved in producing SMP2.

Some of the actions identified in SMP2 should form everyday aspects of this role and that of Planners and Emergency Planners.

Studies and strategies identified in SMP2 will be undertaken by specialist consultants, should they receive grant funding. However it is likely Copeland Borough Council will need to provide information that will help in this process.

6. HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE PROJECT MANAGED AND HOW ARE THE RISKS GOING TO BE MANAGED?

6.1 Project Management

Delivery of the revised Shoreline Management Plan has been project managed by the North West and North Wales Coastal Group and the Group will be responsible for ensuring that the SMP2 Action Plan is delivered.

The Group will also regularly review the Action Plan.

6.2 Risk Management

The proposal will provide the Council with a tool to deliver sustainable flood and coastal erosion risk management over the long term. It should also be used as evidence in the Local Development Framework to help provide sustainable development.

7. WHAT MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS WILL ARISE FROM THIS REPORT?

7.1 Generic Monitoring of Shoreline Management Plans

The Action Plan that forms part of the revised Shoreline Management Plan has an outcome for each of the identified actions. It is the role of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group to monitor the Action Plan and report on its progress.

7.2 Outcomes for Copeland Borough Council

Many of the outcomes from the Action Plan are not directly measurable, but evidence that outcomes are delivered can be demonstrated by coastal defence assets are maintained to required standards, and that coastal risks are taken into account in planning decisions and emergency planning.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – List of SMP Documents

Appendix B – Policy Statements for the Copeland Coast

List of Background Documents:

North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan2

All the sections can be found on the North West and North Wales Coastal Group website, which can be found at:

www.mycoastline.org

Appendix A – List of SMP Documents

SMP2 in its entirety is a huge document with 2 annexes and 12 appendices. The document is set out as follows

- Main SMP2 Document.
- Annex 1 – Policy Statements
- Annex 2 – Glossary of Terms
- Appendix A – SMP2 Development
- Appendix B – Stakeholder Engagement
- Appendix C – Baseline Process Understanding
- Appendix D – SEA Environmental Baseline Report (Theme Review)
- Appendix E – Issues and Objectives Evaluation
- Appendix F – Initial Policy Appraisal and Scenario Development
- Appendix G – Scenario Testing
- Appendix H – Economical Appraisal and Sensitivity Testing
- Appendix I – Strategic Environmental Assessment Report
- Appendix J – Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Appendix K – Water Framework Directive Assessment
- Appendix L – Metadata and Bibliographic Databases

The full document is available on the North West and North Wales Coastal Group website, which can be found at:

www.mycoastline.org

The most relevant section is Annex 1 – Policy Statements, which show the policies for each section of the coast over the three time epochs, along with the justification for the selected policy, the likely implications of each policy and the action plan for each section. A copy of the Policy Statements can be found in Appendix A.

Appendix B – Policy Statements for the Copeland Coast

(Note: pdf versions of the policy statements for each section of the coast can be forwarded by e-mail if requested, as these are clearer to read.)

A paper copy of this, the Main SMP2 Document and the Consultation Report has been left in the members' room.