

What is a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)?

A SMP is a policy document for coastal defence management. It takes account of other existing planning initiatives and legislative requirements and is intended to inform wider strategic planning. It does not set policies for the management of issues such as development or land drainage.

The main objective of a SMP is to identify sustainable long-term management policies for the coast. It is inevitable that the plan will recommend changes to the current approach in some areas, however, it will help manage these so that the people, places, industry and wildlife affected can adapt at a reasonable pace. This approach avoids tying future generations into inflexible and expensive options for defence.

The shoreline management policies that will be considered are those defined by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which are:

Hold the line	Maintain the existing defence line;
Advance the line	Build new defences seaward of the existing defence line;
Managed realignment	Allow the shoreline to change with management to control or limit movement; and
No active intervention	A decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences.

The Study Area

The coastline in North West England and North Wales varies considerably along its length in its formation and the rates of loss and build up that occur due to natural processes, such as currents, wind, tides and waves. The character of the North West and North Wales coast is generally low-lying with vast intertidal mudflats, extensive saltmarsh and sand dune habitats, wide sandy beaches and spectacular views.

Historically, the region's coastal areas – its ports and fisheries, major resort towns and clusters of industry - have been instrumental in driving its economy and today the region maintains a thriving maritime economy. The wide variety of habitats leads to a diverse range of human usage including recreational, industrial and residential. Over 80% of the North West and North Wales' coastal habitats are designated as nationally and internationally important environmental sites.

How will the Plan be developed?

The plan will be developed in line with latest Government (Defra supported by WAG) guidance, which can be found in full at www.defra.gov.uk/envirom/fcd/policy/smp.htm.

It will have two main influences: technical assessment and democratic input, and will be developed in phases.

The plan will be developed by the North West and North Wales Coastal Group, which consists of coastal Local Authorities, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales, Cadw and English Heritage.

All decisions made by the group will be reviewed by Elected Members (local councillors) to make sure the decisions are democratic and to ensure that local interests are being properly represented. To make sure that the plan is properly informed about local issues and interests, stakeholder groups will also be set up.

The SMP review process will take 2.5yrs to complete, with the first draft expected in August 2009, when there will be a full public consultation exercise.

How can I get Involved?

If you would like to participate in the consultation for the preparation of the revised Shoreline Management Plan for the North West coast between Great Orme's Head and the Scottish Border please contact:

North West and North Wales Coastal Group
c/o Fiona Gregory
Blackpool Council
Westgate House, Squires Gate Lane
Blackpool FY4 2TS

smp2@mycoastline.org

Or visit the website at www.mycoastline.org and follow the links.

Further Information

The five first round SMPs developed for the North West and North Wales coastline can be viewed online at <http://www.mycoastline.org/>

Throughout the review process, review documents will also be available to view and download from this website.

North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan Initial Consultation 2008





Introduction

A Shoreline Management Plan is now being developed for the coastline from Great Orme's Head at Llandudno in Wales to the Scottish Border. The plan is led by Local Authorities and will ensure that future defence works along the entire stretch are managed in relation to their impact on one another. Further details can be found in this leaflet, including how members of the public can get involved in the process.

The Changing Coastline

The coastline is constantly changing. Waves and tides naturally erode some areas of the coastline and deposit the eroded material at others. The amount of physical change depends on the degree of exposure to storms, the underlying geology and the structures present. Coastal changes usually take place over many years and this can be seen where parts of villages have been lost through erosion or where former coastal settlements are now landlocked because of coastal build up.

Human interventions to build coastal defences to control flooding and erosion have also had an influence on the evolution of our coastline. In the past these interventions may have taken place without an appreciation of the effect that they have on other locations up and down the coast.

Whilst these changes continue, social, economic and environmental pressures are increasing in coastal areas. People enjoy living by and visiting the coast so there is always pressure for more housing. As international trade increases so does the demand for port space and associated coastal-based industry. Such development places stress on natural coastal habitats that are often unique and of national and international importance.



Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

Much of the present shoreline of the English and Welsh coasts has been shaped by sea level rise following the last ice age. Recent studies show that sea level rise is increasing again due to climate change.

Climate change may result in other significant changes to the coast, such as:

- Greater frequency of storms;
- Increasing wave heights;
- Increased erosion;
- Fluctuating rainfall; and
- Increasing river flows.



What does this all mean?

Even if the defences are continually improved where they are now, it is likely that the beaches and coastal environments in front of them will be changed by the effect of the sea. This means we need a long-term plan to co-ordinate how our coast is managed. This Shoreline Management Plan, or SMP, will identify how our coastline can be best managed over the next 100 years in order to prevent the loss of beaches or other coastal environments, i.e. intertidal habitats, and to best protect coastal communities.

Coastal Defence Planning

There are three tiers of coastal defence planning in England and Wales, each with different roles in the risk management process:

A *Shoreline Management Plan* (SMP) identifies general policies and general implementation requirements; *Strategy* identifies the nature and timing of works to be undertaken; and *Scheme* identifies the design and construction of capital works and maintenance.

The SMP forms the highest tier in this process and sets the long-term direction for the implementation of risk management techniques. The first generation of SMPs, completed for the entire coastline of England and Wales, were designed to provide a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal erosion and flooding. There were five covering the North West and North Wales region. They presented a long-term policy framework for coastal management. Many local strategic plans and studies have been carried out following the production of these SMPs and where appropriate these have led to investment in capital projects.

The SMPs are now due for review to ensure that they are updated to take account of the latest knowledge and information and a greater understanding of the risks we face in the future.

The North West and North Wales Coastal Group has commissioned Halcrow to undertake this review to develop a SMP for this coastline from Great Orme's Head on the North Wales coast to the Scottish Border. The second generation SMPs will identify sustainable and deliverable solutions to manage these risks while working with natural processes wherever possible.

