

# CABINET

10 NOVEMBER 2010

## REPORT OF HEAD OF TECHNICAL AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES

### **A.9 ESSEX AND SOUTH SUFFOLK SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN APPROVAL AND ADOPTION BY TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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#### **PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION**

##### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To seek the Cabinet's approval of the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan ('SMP')

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A SMP is a high level policy document which provides a long term plan for the sustainable management of the coast. SMPs aim to identify flood and erosion risk and set out the best ways to manage those risks over the next 100 years, looking at the short, medium and long term.

The Essex and South Suffolk SMP has been prepared by the Environment Agency in partnership with all the authorities involved in shoreline management along the Essex and South Suffolk shoreline, which includes this Council. The Council has been actively involved throughout the preparation of the SMP.

The development of the SMP began in June 2008. The process involved scoping of what was required, data gathering and analysis. Policy options were developed in consultation with stakeholders. A draft plan was made available for public consultation between March and June 2010. Following the close of the consultation period, comments have been considered and appropriate adjustments have been made to the text and action plan to accommodate the comments received. Significant concerns were raised to some of the proposals for Tendring's shoreline, in particular the policy for managed realignment on the Jaywick/St. Osyth frontage and Holland Haven to Frinton frontage. The policy options have now been changed to a dual policy of Hold the Line/Managed Realignment to take account of these concerns.

It is the intention that the Shoreline Management plan now being proposed will be reviewed and updated every 5 to 10 years to take into account any change in circumstances.

The plan is an extensive document in excess of 210 pages with a further 10 large appendices and 28 Policy Maps. A copy of all the documents will be provided to members in advance of the meeting on disc. A paper copy of a summary document and a set of policy plans that details the main points for Tendring will also be provided.

The plan has been made available to Service Development and Delivery committee which meets on 8 November 2010 and their comments if any will be made available for consideration.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan be approved.**

## PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

### DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The main role of the SMP is to identify areas at risk of flooding and erosion and set out how these risks can be managed effectively to ensure the future of the shoreline is managed in a sustainable way. The SMP considers how the shoreline would respond to different management options and how these would affect the values and features characteristic of the Essex and South Suffolk coastline.

The issues of flooding and coastal erosion are serious issues that affect much of the district's shoreline. Seeking a sustainable, long-term approach to shoreline management is therefore in the Council's interest.

### RESOURCES AND RISK

#### Resources

The SMP process is funded externally by the Government and the document is being prepared by the Environment Agency. However, Tendring officers and Members have been involved throughout the preparation of the draft SMP by attending numerous meetings and workshops, providing feedback and technical advice and assisting the Environment Agency during the consultation process by assisting at exhibitions and helping to raise awareness of the consultation.

#### Risk

The Council is a key partner organisation and has been actively involved throughout the whole process, failure to approve the SMP could jeopardise the integrity of the whole SMP process and the potential for the document to be used as evidence when bidding for future funding for sea defences. This would be particularly problematic for the Council as certain stretches of the district's existing sea defences are particularly vulnerable to coastal change and are in need of repair and replacement.

### LEGAL

Although the SMP is a non-statutory document, it becomes increasingly important if endorsed by all the partner organisations involved during its preparation. The final SMP will be used as evidence to inform the preparation of other plans and strategies that are statutory and significant i.e. future versions of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and Local Development Framework documents.

### OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below:

### **Crime and Disorder**

Whilst the SMP does not directly address crime and disorder, it is accepted that policies in the SMP may result in physical change and redevelopment that requires good design, which can minimise crime and disorder (including the fear of crime and disorder) and promote community safety.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Whilst the SMP does not directly address equality and diversity, it is accepted that future community engagement and specific projects that stem from the SMP may provide the opportunity to encourage social inclusion and promote equality and diversity.

### **Health Inequalities**

Whilst the SMP does not directly address the issue of health inequalities it is accepted that effective shoreline management can provide opportunities for new recreation and leisure facilities and improved access to the coast, which can bring about health improvements and improve an individual's quality of life and well-being.

On the Jaywick/St Osyth frontage, the policy option has been changed from Managed realignment in Epoch 3 to Hold the Line/Managed Realignment. Although this may generate some uncertainty about the long term strategy to deal with the poor housing and social inequalities in this area further study work will now be developed to look at the long term future of this area and the problems and costs associated with continuing to defend such a low lying area. This work will be used to inform the next SMP and to consider the policy options in more detail.

### **Area or Ward Affected**

The whole district.

### **Consultation/Public Engagement**

As a key partner organisation the Council has been involved throughout the whole SMP process and helped to inform the preparation of the document. Consultation and stakeholder engagement has been a strong and consistent feature throughout the preparation of the SMP. The Environment Agency was keen to ensure as many people as possible with an interest in the shoreline were actively engaged and made aware of the SMP process. The SMP document itself provides full details of the amount of public consultation and community engagement that took place whilst the SMP was being prepared.

## **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

Approximately ten years ago, the first suite of SMPs were completed for the entire length of the coastline in England and Wales. These SMPs are now being reviewed and updated to take into account new information, data and legislation. The proposals cover the South Suffolk and Essex coast from Felixstowe Port (in Suffolk) to Two Trees Island in the River Thames.

The formal review of the SMP began in June 2008, following a process of scoping, data gathering and analysis, policy options were developed in consultation with stakeholders. A draft plan was made available for public consultation between March and June 2010.

The SMP is based on a large amount of technical data and evidence. This includes an understanding of coastal processes and how these are affecting our coast, the condition of existing defences and what would be needed to improve defences, the impact of flooding and climate change and an understanding about the current use of land around our shoreline, from a social, economic and environmental perspective.

Throughout the development of the SMP the Head of Technical and Procurement Services and a Senior Planning Officer have attended regular 'Client Steering Group' ('CSG') meetings. The CSG is essentially the technical advisory group that has helped steer the development of the SMP and includes officers from all the authorities in the SMP area, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England.

There has also been consistent Member representation by Councillors Guglielmi and Mitchell at the 'Elected Members' Forum' ('EMF'), which includes elected Councillors from all the partner authorities covered or affected by the SMP. The EMF is essentially the group that makes the important decisions about the contents of the SMP and how the SMP process is carried out, on the advice of the Environment Agency and the CSG. Therefore, the SMP represents the work of all the partners and organisations involved in the project.

## **CURRENT POSITION**

The public consultation period on the draft SMP closed on 28 June 2010. The formal consultation period provided the opportunity for the general public to view and comment on the draft SMP. Cabinet considered and provided a formal response to the consultation at its meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

Following the close of the consultation period, work has been completed on analysing all the comments received and deciding what changes need to be made to the SMP before it is finalised. These consultation comments have been considered by CSG and EMF and appropriate adjustments have been made to the text and action plan to accommodate the comments received.

One of the main outcomes from the plan is to put forward the proposed Management policies for each part of the coast for the next 100years. The draft policies put forward at the consultation stage have now been reconsidered and remain largely unchanged with two notable exceptions. There was considerable opposition to the proposal put forward for Managed realignment on the frontage between Holland and Frinton (management Unit C2) in epoch 3 (long term). There was also opposition to the proposal for Managed realignment in Epoch 3 across the Jaywick and St Osyth Marsh frontage (Management Unit C4). Following a request by the Portfolio Holder for Technical and Procurement Services the policies for both these frontages have been amended and now have a dual policy of 'Hold the line/Managed realignment'. Further studies will be carried out by the EA to look more closely at the parameters affecting these units. The matter will be considered again in the next round of SMPs'.

## **SUMMARY OF THE SMP**

The SMP covers a 100-year period, divided into the following 3 phases (called 'epochs'):

- epoch 1 (short term): now till 2025
- epoch 2 (medium term): 2025 – 2055
- epoch 3 (long term): 2055 – 2105

The SMP area has been divided into a number of small, manageable 'policy development zones' (PDZs). The SMP is required to identify which of the following four policies will apply to each PDZ for each of the 3 epochs. The four policy options are as follows:

- Hold the line – means holding the defence line where it is now. This can mean maintaining or upgrading the standard of protection, but it can also mean that the standard is allowed to reduce in time, depending on the local situation.
- Advance the line – means building new defences seaward of the existing defence line. This policy should be limited to those stretches of coastline where significant land reclamation is considered.
- Managed realignment – means allowing or enabling the shoreline to move, with associated management to control or limit the effect on land use and environment. This can take various forms, depending on the nature of the shoreline and the intent of management to be achieved. All are characterised by managing change, not only technically (where management can mean breaching, building and maintaining defences) but also for land use and environment (where management can mean helping or ensuring adaptation). For the Essex and South Suffolk SMP, two distinct types of managed realignment are relevant. For frontages that are currently undefended, managed realignment means that the SMP allows local and limited intervention to limit the risks, as long as negative impacts are minimised. For frontages that currently have flood defences, managed realignment means realigning the flood defences to a more landward location.
- No active intervention (NAI) – means no investment in coastal defences or operations. It can apply to unprotected cliff frontages and to areas where investment cannot be justified, potentially resulting in natural or unmanaged realignment of the shoreline.

The decisions in the SMP are based on sound evidence and realistic assumptions about the future (i.e. funding, climate change). The main message emerging from the SMP is that it is not sustainable to continue defending the whole of the SMP shoreline in its current form. Therefore, some areas will require a change in management approach to ensure the overarching aims and objectives of the SMP are achieved.

A number of sites have been identified for potential managed realignment in Tendring between now and 2105. Most of these will take place within either epoch 2 or epoch 3, which means there is time to carefully plan and manage change.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION**

Proposed Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan.

## **APPENDICES**

- 1. SMP (on disc)**
- 2. SMP Summary Document for Tendring District Council**
- 3. Maps of the Tendring coast**

(n.b. These are very large documents and copies will be provided to Cabinet members, should other members require a copy please contact the Head of Technical and Procurement Services)