

Committee	<b>Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment</b>
Date	<b>4 April 2005</b>
Title of Report	<b>South Foreland to Selsey Bill Shoreline Management Plans</b>
By	<b>Director of Transport and Environment</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To agree the response to the consultation on the draft plans.</b>

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. To agree the response to the consultation on the South Foreland to Beachy Head and Beachy Head to Selsey Bill Shoreline Management Plans (Appendix B).**
  - 2. To authorise the Director of Transport & Environment to commission such studies as are necessary to look at the implications of future coastal management policy options.**
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## **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this consultation. Funding for any specific studies will be considered from within existing budgets in the first instance.

## **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 Shoreline Management Plans (SMP) are non-statutory documents for the planning and management of coastal defences. An SMP provides an objective large-scale assessment of the risks to people and the developed historic and natural environment resulting from the evolution of the coast. It presents a policy framework that addresses these risks in a way that does not tie future generations to costly and unsustainable activities.

2.2 Strategic management of the south-eastern coastline is carried out for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through two coastal groups which comprise members of all the maritime local authorities, the Environment Agency, English Nature and other stakeholder bodies. These coastal groups - the South East Coastal Group and the South Downs Coastal Group - have been responsible for commissioning the two SMPs which cover the coastline of East Sussex – the *North Foreland to Beachy Head SMP* and the *Beachy Head to Selsey Bill SMP*. The County Council has no direct responsibility for coast protection – this is a function carried out by maritime boroughs and districts. However, it is involved in strategic planning at a sub-regional level and is affected as a property owner and a highway authority.

2.3 The first SMPs were adopted in 1997 looking ahead over a 50 year time horizon and numerous schemes have been implemented based on the policies they recommended. DEFRA provides guidance and grant-aid to local authorities, (maritime Districts, Boroughs and Unitary authorities), for the preparation of SMPs and delivery of schemes.

2.4 Recognising the need for a review, the coastal groups commissioned consulting engineers, the Halcrow Group Ltd to review the two plans. This review takes account of latest coastal studies and monitoring information, changes in legislation, (e.g. the European Habitats Directive), and changes in national flood and coastal defence policy. The draft plans were published for consultation in January for return by early April. Responses will be assessed and the final version of the SMPs will be presented to each authority for adoption later this year.

2.4 A 100 year appraisal timeframe has been examined in this review because it requires us to look beyond the life of current coastal defence structures into a period when climate change is likely to have a significant impact on coastal management. Three time horizons are set out in the plans:

- ❖ 0 to 20 years (short term)
- ❖ 20 to 50 years (medium term)
- ❖ 50 to 100 years (long term)

Four policy scenarios are defined by DEFRA:

- ❖ **Hold the Line** maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by existing coastal defences
- ❖ **Advance the Line** build new defences seaward of the existing defence line
- ❖ **Managed Realignment** allow retreat of the shoreline inland, with management to control or limit that movement
- ❖ **No Active Intervention** a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining any defences

### 3. Comments / Appraisal

3.1 A summary of the proposed coastal management policies is set out in Appendix A. Generally, all the major built-up coastal frontages, Hastings, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Seaford and Newhaven have **Hold the Line** policies through to the long-term. The unpopulated sections of coast – Fairlight Cove West, Beachy Head and Seaford Head – have **No Active Intervention** for the current and long term. There are no objections to these policy proposals.

3.2 There are four areas of the coastline, however, where there is property, other infrastructure or areas of significant environmental or heritage importance for which the proposals are to allow the natural coastal processes take place within the plan period, albeit subject to further studies and monitoring. These are from the River Rother to Fairlight Cove Central, Cuckmere Haven, Tide Mills and Peacehaven to Saltdean. In each of these cases I feel that there is currently insufficient information to recommend adoption of these policies. The suggested response from the County Council to the consultation is that regular monitoring of coastal erosion should be put in place and that more detailed studies are undertaken to look at the wider social, economic and environmental implications of adopting the proposals, including the issue of compensation. A copy of the suggested detailed response to these proposals, Appendix B, is available in the Members' room.

### 4. Environmental Issues

4.1 Coastal erosion is a natural process that has shaped our coastline for millions of years. Intervention by man in this process to protect the coastline can be costly in implementation and future maintenance. Climate change will make protection increasingly difficult and costly for future generations. Therefore, intervention has to be considered very carefully taking account of all the risks and benefits. There can be substantial environmental gains in allowing coastal processes to take over from currently defended coastline.

### 5. Conclusions and reason for Recommendation

There are no objections to the policies in the draft Shoreline Management Plans which propose **Hold the Line** or **No Active Intervention** for sections of unpopulated coastline. However, there are a number of proposals where it is suggested that natural coastal processes are allowed to take place where property, infrastructure or areas of significant environmental or heritage importance would be affected during the plan period. I consider that there is currently insufficient information to recommend adoption of these proposals at the present time and that further studies should take place. Some of the monitoring process will be undertaken by the Coastal Groups and their consultants. In other cases, such as at Cuckmere Haven, the Environment Agency is undertaking studies. It may also be necessary for the County Council to commission specific studies to address certain issues raised by the proposals in the SMPs.

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Local Member(s): All

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

South Foreland to Beachy Head & Beachy Head to Selsey Bill Shoreline Management Plans

## SUMMARY OF SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN POLICY PROPOSALS

SMP	SMP CELL	FRONTAGE	0 TO 20 YEARS	20 TO 50 YEARS	50 TO 100 YEARS	KEY
South Foreland to Beachy Head	15	Jury's Gap to Camber	HTL	HTL	HTL	HTL = Hold the Line
	16	Camber Sands	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	17	River Rother	HTL	HTL	HTL	MR = Managed Retreat
	18	River Rother to Cliff End	HTL	HTL	MR	
	19	Cliff End to Fairlight Cove	NAI	NAI	NAI	NAI = No Active Intervention
	20	Fairlight Cove East	MR	MR	MR	
	21	Fairlight Cove Central	MR	NAI	NAI	
	22	Fairlight Cove West	(NAI)	(NAI)	(NAI)	MR = cell contains property or infrastructure. (Brackets indicates no property etc)
	23	Fairlight Cove to Hastings	(NAI)	(NAI)	(NAI)	
	24	Hastings	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	25	Bulverhythe & Glyne Gap	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	26	Bexhill & Cooden	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	27	Pevensey & Hooe Levels	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	28	Sovereign Harbour	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	29	Eastbourne	HTL	HTL	HTL	
30	Beachy Head	(NAI)	(NAI)	(NAI)		
Beachy Head to Selsey Bill	1	Beachy Head to Cuckmere Haven	(NAI)	(NAI)	(NAI)	
	2	Cuckmere Haven	MR	NAI	NAI	
	3	Seaford Head	(NAI)	(NAI)	(NAI)	
	4	Seaford	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	5	Seaford to Newhaven Harbour	MR	MR	MR	
	6	Newhaven Harbour & Ouse Valley	HTL	HTL	HTL	
	7	Newhaven to Peacehaven Heights	NAI	NAI	NAI	
	8	Peacehaven	HTL	HTL	?	
	9	Telscombe Cliffs	NAI	NAI	NAI	
	10	Saltdean to Rottingdean	HTL	HTL	?	
	11	Rottingdean to Brighton Marina	HTL	HTL	?	