

**PART 1 : INTRODUCTION**

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**1 BACKGROUND**

A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a document which sets out a general strategy for coastal defence taking account of natural coastal processes and human and other environmental influences and needs. This is intended to provide a strategic framework for the management of coastal defences along this coastline in the future and a basis upon which future informed decision making and policy setting can be made.

A previous study of the coastline of England and Wales for the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF), established that coastal sediment movements occur within distinct boundaries, or cells, which are rarely coincident with administrative boundaries. Piecemeal coast protection schemes may not always be compatible with coastline needs elsewhere within the same sediment cell. Recognising this fact, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Coastal Group decided to produce a SMP for the shoreline between Land's End and Hartland Point wherein all conflicting needs and constraints are identified and considered.

The members of the Coastal Group who have a direct interest in this shoreline comprise the following organisations:

Penwith District Council	Cornwall County Council
Kerrier District Council	Environment Agency
Carrick District Council	English Nature
Restormel Borough Council	MAFF
North Cornwall District Council	

As Maritime District Councils under the Coast Protection Act 1949 the Local Authorities hold powers regarding coast protection issues within their respective boundaries. In general the responsibility for sea defences, which protect against flooding, is administered by the Environment Agency using powers under the Water Resources Act, 1991, and the Land Drainage Act, 1991.

Following an initial Scoping Study completed in 1996, the Coastal Group appointed Halcrow in November 1997, to produce this Shoreline Management Plan based on the guidelines published in 1995 by MAFF.

**2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this Plan is to provide a framework for the development of sustainable coastal defence policies from Land's End to Hartland Point. In accordance with the SMP guidelines issued by MAFF, the main objectives to be fulfilled through development of the Plan are:

- to improve the statutory planning process and related coastal zone planning;
- to ensure that future policies for coastal defence do not adversely interfere with the behaviour of the natural processes within the Plan or across Plan boundaries;
- to determine sustainable policies for shoreline management sub-cells based on a thorough evaluation of the processes and interactions affecting the shoreline in accordance with MAFF strategies for flood and coastal defence;
- to ensure compatibility with national and local biodiversity targets by protecting and where possible enhancing nature conservation interest and in particular to safeguard the integrity of sites of regional, national or international importance;
- to determine, where required, appropriate standards and forms of sustainable coastal defence for existing and/or new works that are environmentally acceptable, including the maintenance and management of man-made and natural coastal defences;
- to promote co-ordinated monitoring of coastal processes and regular shoreline surveys throughout the sub-cell to improve knowledge and understanding of the coastal environment, including identifying gaps in knowledge and proposing future research;
- to develop an improved public awareness of the behaviour of the coast and the influences they and others have on it.

**3 THE SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**3.1 General**

Shoreline Management Plans are 'non-statutory' as they are not required by law. The need to develop strategic management planning for the coastlines of England and Wales is, however, well recognised and in assessing proposed coastal defence works for grant aid, MAFF will require the existence of a SMP. For the purpose of any non-statutory document, such as this SMP, suggestions and strategies for the future must consider the existing statutory planning system. It is also vital that the SMP focuses on all of the issues relevant to the shoreline within the geographical area concerned. It can then operate as a stand-alone document.

**3.2 Development of the Shoreline Management Plan**

Development of the SMP initially required the collation of existing information and the undertaking of studies to produce an assessment of the present situation, identifying the various needs and conflicts of interests. This has enabled Management Units to be defined against which the wide-ranging and disparate issues have been presented.

The baseline studies on which the SMP is founded were undertaken between November 1997 and September 1998, and was presented in its draft form, at that stage, to the Coastal Group. In the next phase of development, the final strategy has been developed from the earlier studies, formalising the division of the shoreline into the Management Units and establishing appropriate management strategies for each. This phase of work was completed in December 1998. A full review was then undertaken by the Coastal Group, with final documents issued in March 1999.

The SMP is a working document, which is designed to be updated over time. This will be achieved through a set review procedure. This concept of having a "living document" ensures that new information, new understanding of coastal processes and response, future changes in planning policy or environmental needs, can be incorporated into the SMP. Such an approach will re-confirm the existing coastal defence policy or advocate a change to a new policy.

It is essential that this first issue of the SMP is recognised for what it is, the foundation for shoreline management planning. It is not the definitive solution. This SMP is based upon the information that is available now and will need to evolve as future studies, such as those identified in this document, are undertaken to fill the gaps in existing knowledge. An important aspect of this first issue of the SMP is the identification of areas of uncertainty, to enable the prioritisation of future studies and monitoring. In this respect the aims of an SMP, as defined in the MAFF Guidance, should be re-iterated, that is "...to provide the basis for sustainable coastal defence policies....".

**3.3 Format of the Shoreline Management Plan**

The format of this SMP document has been created to act as a base document for shoreline management between Land's End and Hartland Point. The intention is that the document is used as a whole, but individual sections (eg any particular

Area or Management Unit) can be easily extracted as a stand-alone statement. It is also important that future changes in planning policy, environmental Characteristics, or knowledge of coastal processes, which may in turn result in changes to the developed strategy, can be integrated through revision to parts of the document rather than complete re-issue.

Part 2 of this document describes the framework of the SMP for future strategic management purposes along with guidance on how this document is to be used. General SMP wide strategy requirements are contained within Part 3 along with recommendations for future monitoring, the need for further studies, and the procedure for future review of the plan, whilst Part 4 provides guidance on the format of the detailed strategy assessment. Part 5 then presents the information on each Area and associated Management Units, and the development of the management strategy.

This document is supported by three other volumes, which provide detailed appendices to the SMP strategy. Volume 2 presents the individual study reports on the physical environment, coastal defences, developed environment, natural environment and planning. Volume 3 contains the detailed mapping of various aspect of the shoreline environment, along with an inventory of all beaches, beach reports, historic maps, and coastal defences. Finally, Volume 4 has Additional Information, including a list of relevant documents and details of responses to public consultation on the SMP, with the facility to incorporate new information to be considered by future updates of the SMP.

#### **3.4 Integration with Other Plans**

The planning system is important in guiding the way in which the coast is developed and conserved. A range of statutory and non-statutory plans play an important role in achieving this. The statutory plans are prepared against the background of national planning guidance, with non-statutory plans providing further advice and guidance on the development or management of a particular location or "theme". There is great importance in ensuring that plans are integrated and each informs those related to it. The SMPs have been prepared in this environment and have attempted to complement existing plans.

Of the relevant statutory plans the most significant are probably the County Structure Plans and the Local Plans. Their policies inform the planning process of the adoption of coastal defence policies within the SMP and conversely will inform the SMP decision making process.

Based on the EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, parts of the coast have been designated as marine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). There is a requirement to maintain "favourable conservation status" of these areas, which has led to the preparation of SAC Management Plans, with particular headway being made in the Fal (on the south coast). All SAC sites and SPA designations form part of the Natura 2000 series and all relevant authorities responsible for the management of marine Natura 2000 sites are required to establish a statutory management scheme in order to avoid further deterioration or disturbance to the site. The preparation of SMPs in Cornwall have taken account of this new requirement.

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With regards the non-statutory plans probably the most closely allied to the SMPs are the Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs), the successors to Catchment Management Plans. The LEAPs seek to draw together all of the interests associated with ensuring river catchments are managed in a sustainable way. Flood defence, a responsibility of the Environment Agency, is the aspect of greatest common interest between LEAPs and SMPs.

In addition to LEAPS, Estuary Management Plans (EMPs) have been prepared within the SMP area. These are locally progressed, non-statutory initiatives that aim, through partnership and consensus of all interested parties to achieve sustainable management of estuarine areas through strategic management frameworks and recommendations.

With growing awareness of the pressures on, and value of, the coastal zone there have been numerous plans aimed at 'integrated' management. These tend to be localised planning initiatives, particularly on estuaries and areas of the open coast such as Heritage Coast or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These non-statutory plans seek to integrate the many interests of the coast including the natural and man-made, and develop a consensus view as to the way forward.

The Land's End to Hartland Point SMP, along with the other sectoral planning initiatives raised above, are seen as part of the European Commission Demonstration Programme on the Integrated Management of Coastal Zones. Throughout Devon and Cornwall the "Atlantic Living Coastlines" initiative, which is part of this TERRA funded programme, is to incorporate these non statutory plans (such as the SMP) into a single coherent framework that will prepare an integrated strategy for the coast.

Distinct parts of this overall strategy, due for completion in May 2000, will include an Integrated Coastal Zone Management framework and a Coastal Zone Management System (CZMIS). These will be achieved by examining the current CZM initiatives that are already present in Devon and Cornwall, building on their experiences and demonstrating their success. This integral link with the SMP and other initiatives will ensure that duplication of effort is reduced and integration can more easily be achieved.

**4 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**

**4.1 Adoption of the Plan**

The Shoreline Management Plan recommends preferred strategic coastal defence options plus requirements for further studies and future monitoring. The next phase is for each of the individual operating authorities to adopt the plan as a basis for future management of the shoreline. This will involve consultation with all interested organisations.

**4.2 Implementing the Strategy**

Once the plan is adopted, the next procedure is the implementation of the strategies presented in the SMP. This will involve developing outline concepts for the nature of works to be undertaken, producing more detailed cost estimates for them and establishing a programme of both capital and maintenance works. This does not, however, preclude the development of understanding through the undertaking of monitoring or other studies.

Whilst this phase will be conducted separately by each Authority, it will be important to liaise on the implementation programme. This will help to avoid operations which may be to the detriment of others in the shorter term, optimise the use of resources, and increase awareness of other's operations. This could lead to overall benefits and result in lower cost defences in the future. Some strategic studies may therefore be best undertaken as a co-operative effort, which does not stop at administrative boundaries, in a similar manner to the undertaking of this SMP.

Finally, it is important to recognise the need to conduct appropriate studies when developing the outline concepts beyond this stage, ensuring that the local processes are fully understood as well as the broader ones. The monitoring to be undertaken will be of great significance in enabling this.

**4.3 Review and Updating of the Shoreline Management Plan**

As stated previously, this SMP contains the defence strategy that will be implemented at the present time. However, this SMP is a 'live document' and must be capable of change. This concept will ensure that new information, such as that resulting from the additional studies or future monitoring described, as well as any future changes in planning policy or environmental needs can be incorporated into the SMP. The table at the end of this Part should be used to record all relevant new information which should be assessed in updates of the SMP.

These factors may necessitate a change in coastal defence strategy, however it would be inappropriate to have a continuous review and change to the strategy. The approach therefore must be one by which the new information can be incorporated and the implications of this upon the present strategy assessed. This would be collated and a strategy review undertaken at specified intervals. A maximum time span of 5 years between such reviews is recommended. Notwithstanding this, the format of this SMP is such that if circumstances dictated, a review to enable a strategic change in defence policy could be implemented at any time.

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The proposed time frame will allow the monitoring recommendations to be implemented and the further studies to be carried out prior to updating the SMP. As such studies are completed, it is recommended that this information is appended to, or referenced within the SMP.

Ultimately the responsibility for updating and reviewing the SMP lies with the Authorities involved, and close co-operation is necessary. It is important that new information is shared and that each Authority maintains an up to date SMP to avoid a number of different versions existing. This may be best achieved by nominating one Authority as a central co-ordinator with overall responsibility for maintaining the SMP, or appointing an independent party to fulfil this role.

Finally, there has been consultation throughout the development of this SMP to develop awareness and elicit reaction. This consultation should be continued and the SMP used as a vehicle to inform and facilitate public involvement in coastal defence issues in the future.





