
CROUCH AND ROACH ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members approval to make a financial contribution towards the preparation of a Crouch and Roach Estuary Management Plan.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of the estuary management plan is to provide the co-ordination and communication framework for applying the principles of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM). ICZM is a multidisciplinary activity involving the economy, the community and the environment, and is based on the informed participation and co-operation of all interested and affected parties to achieve equitable and sustainable solutions.
- 2.2 The vision adopted for the Roach Crouch Estuary Strategy is:
- “Strive to ensure the sustainable use of the estuary, maximising its potential in a manner which neither compromises the needs of future generations or its landscape, ecology and historical heritage”.*
- 2.3 In order to develop the project and prepare the management plan, a steering group comprising Rochford, Maldon, and Chelmsford Councils and Essex County Council, together with representatives from the Ministry of Defence Estates, English Nature, Environment Agency, Essex Estuaries Initiative and the Crouch Harbour Authority has been formed.
- 2.4 The Steering Group has prepared a prospectus for a three-year project to undertake the necessary work under the guidance of a project officer. The key output from the project will be the preparation of a plan for the management of the estuaries. Funding has to date been promised from Maldon (£10,000 in year 1, and a bid for a further £10,000 in year 2), Essex County Council (£10,000 in year 1, and a bid for £10,000 in year 2), English Nature (£10,000) and the Countryside Agency (£45,000 over three years).

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 A substantial part of the Roach and Crouch estuaries is contained within Rochford District. To date, Rochford has been involved in the management plan project through officer participation in the steering group.

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- 3.2 However, there is no doubt that the development of a management plan for the estuaries is an extremely important initiative and it is proposed that a financial contribution should be made to the project.
- 3.3 As Members are aware, work on the preparation of the replacement Local Plan is somewhat behind schedule, though rapid progress is now being made. That being the case, it is proposed that a contribution of £10,000 be made to the estuaries management plan project from the local plan budget as a one-off contribution though, of course, depending on progress, Members might wish to consider additional contributions in the future.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The rural undeveloped coastline is a valuable environmental resource that must be protected.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A contribution of £10,000 towards the preparation of a Crouch and Roach Estuaries Plan can be made from the Local Plan budget. A provision was bought forward from the previous financial year to enable the wider aspects of the Local Plan to be resourced.

6 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the committee **RESOLVES**

To determine whether to make a financial contribution of £10,000 towards the preparation of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Management Plan. (HPS)

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Background Papers:

Estuary Management Plan prospectus – November 2002

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