
ROACH & CROUCH FLOOD MANAGEMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on the Environment Agency's (EA) flood management proposals for the Roach and Crouch Estuaries. The deadline for comments is 14th November 2003.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Over the last 2/3 years, the EA has been preparing a Flood Management Strategy for the Roach and Crouch Estuaries. Work on the Strategy is now nearing completion and the EA is seeking comments on their proposals before the final publication of the Strategy report.
- 2.2 Given the importance of this issue for the District, a copy of the consultation document has been sent to all Members of the Committee and a copy placed in the Members' Library.

3 POLICY AND OPTIONS

- 3.1 The key strategic objective for the EA is to provide a Flood Management Strategy that "Supports the long-term objectives of protecting people's lives and property, whilst developing a more sustainable Estuary shape".
- 3.2 In considering this and the other strategic objectives outlined in the consultation document, the EA has derived five policies to be applied to the coastline along the Roach and Crouch. These are:
- Hold the line
 - Managed re-alignment
 - Advance the line
 - Limited intervention
 - Do nothing/no EA maintenance.
- 3.3 Members will note from the consultation document that these policy options are then applied to the Roach and Crouch estuaries coastline to illustrate the proposed management situation in 2009 and in 2054 (Pages 6-9).
- 3.4 The key points to note from the proposals are:

2009

- Managed re-alignment at Hullbridge (already agreed)
- No EA maintenance on a stretch of the northern boundary of Wallasea (Scheme for re-alignment previously agreed with landowner)

- Managed re-alignment on the North East corner of Wallasea Island (to tie in with the scheme implemented by the landowner)
- Do nothing/no maintenance on Rushley Island
- Managed retreat on an area to the West of Potten Island on Barlinghall Creek.

2054

- Further managed re-alignment on Wallasea Island
- Managed re-alignment on Potten Island
- Managed re-alignment on New England and Havengore Islands
- Managed re-alignment at the North Eastern tip of Foulness Island.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The options outlined in the draft Strategy would, over the course of the next 50 years, result in some significant changes to the extent of protected land in the District.
- 4.2 However, the areas to be the subject of re-alignment are largely unpopulated and reflect the need for a realistic assessment of the requirement to continue to protect all low-lying land areas at the Eastern end of the District, taking account of increasing costs, changing climate and sea levels.
- 4.3 On the positive side, managed re-alignment has the potential to create new wetlands to enhance the environmental value of existing European and Nationally protected sites.
- 4.4 Overall, it is considered that the EA's proposals for 2009 and 2054 are a realistic response to the environmental pressures on the District.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Risk

- 5.1 Without a substantial level of continuing maintenance, there is a risk that sections of land at the Eastern end of the District will be subject to flooding in the future. Given changes in climate and sea level and the substantial requirement for maintenance and strengthening of existing sea walls, a programme of managed realignment of parts of the coastline over the next fifty years reflects a sensible response to flood risk

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The need for managed realignment of the coastline reflects the growing environmental impacts of climate change and sea level rise on low-lying coastlines. The creation of new salt marsh and wetland will, though, have positive environmental benefits for an area of coastline that is already of significant importance in ecological terms.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Planning permission will be required for the construction of new sea walls.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Members' comments, the EA be advised that the Council supports the principles of the flood management options outlined in the consultation document.

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Background Papers:

Roach and Crouch Flood Management Strategy Consultation – Environment Agency, August 2003

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