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## ESSEX AND SUFFOLK SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals for the long term management of the shoreline as set out in the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2010) ("SMP2"), and recommends that the plan be endorsed by the Council as the overarching framework for flood defences in the District in compliance with the Habitats Regulation Assessment.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A Shoreline Management Plan ("SMP") is a high level policy document in which the organisations that manage the shoreline set their long-term plan. The SMP aims to identify the best ways to manage flood and erosion risk to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment. It also identifies opportunities where shoreline management can work with others to make improvements. A copy of the plan has been placed in the Members library.

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The SMP is an important part of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) strategy for managing flooding and coastal erosion. This strategy has two key aims:-
- To reduce the threat of flooding and erosion to people and their property; and
  - To benefit the environment, society and economy as far as possible in line with the Government's "sustainable development principles" which are as follows:-
    - Living within environmental limits;
    - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
    - Achieving a sustainable economy;
    - Using sound science responsibly; and
    - Promoting good governance.
- 3.2 In 1997 a first round of SMPs was completed for the entire length of the coastline of England and Wales. The revised SMP2 builds on the first round of plans, taking into account updated information collected, changing circumstances, and revised geographical boundaries.
- 3.3 The main aim of the SMP2 is to develop the intent of management for the shoreline that achieves the best possible and achievable balance of all the interests around the shoreline for the next 100 years. In the UK there is no statutory responsibility on anyone to provide or maintain flood and erosion

defences. The Environment Agency and the maritime local authorities only have powers to do so and they need to work within the limited budgets available.

- 3.4 The SMP2 does not make decisions about land use and environmental values, but it does set the parameters within which coastal land use and the coastal environment will function. The SMP2 has therefore been developed through a partnership approach between the Environment Agency, the local and unitary authorities, Essex and Suffolk County Councils, Natural England and English Heritage as well as organisations that have an interest or responsibility in coastal management.
- 3.5 The Environment Agency has worked closely with all councils in the production of the SMP2 to ensure that residential dwellings within the District are best protected.

#### **4 IMPLICATIONS FOR ROCHFORD**

- 4.1 Management Unit H Crouch and Roach Estuaries, and Management Unit I: Foulness, Pottton and Rushley Islands are the areas of relevance for Rochford District.
- 4.2 For Unit H, management is intended to sustain and support the viability of communities, tourism and commercial activities while creating new inter tidal habitats and focussing food and erosion risk management on frontages where it is most needed. The policy intent is to maintain flood and erosion defence to all dwellings, key infrastructure and tourism facilities at risk of flood and erosion, though accepting also the need for realigning some of the defences that are under pressure.
- 4.3 The frontages where the existing flood defences will continue to be held at their current alignment (for Rochford) are at Battlesbridge, Hullbridge, Brandy Hole, South Fambridge, Canewdon West, Stambridge, Rochford, Barling Marsh, Little Wakering and Great Wakering.
- 4.4 Defences are under pressure at Canewdon West, Barling Marshes and Great Wakering. Landward realignment is not an option for these locations. At Canewdon West the existing frontline defences contain refuse, there is landfill behind the defences at Barling Marshes and some of the land at Great Wakering is in use as military ranges. The SMP does though recognise that holding existing alignments will be challenging.
- 4.5 There are five frontage areas in Rochford where economic analysis supports the maintenance or upgrade of the standard protection, at Battlesbridge and Hullbridge, eastwards of Brandy Hole, Rochford, Barling Marsh, and Little and Great Wakering.
- 4.6 For Unit I, it is also intended to sustain and support the viability of communities, tourism and commercial activities while creating new inter tidal habitats and focussing flood risk management on frontages where it is most

needed. The policy is to maintain flood defence to Foulness and Potton Islands and that there be a gradual realignment of the defences of Rushley Island.

- 4.7 Whilst the defences of all three islands are under pressure, realignment is not considered realistic for Foulness given the current military land use of the island which is of national importance, nor for Potton where there are expected to be contaminated materials. Landward realignment is considered to be an option for Rushley Island.

## **5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The assessment of risk (flood and erosion risk) are central to the analysis and policy proposals of SMP2.
- 5.2 The plan presents a strategy intended to reduce the threat of flooding and erosion to people and their property. SMP2 is a high level document intended to inform the preparation of other documents including the Local Development Framework.
- 5.3 In assessing the risk for each stretch of coastline from flooding and erosion, the plan considers four policy options that describe the actual management of the shoreline as follows:-
- Hold the line – holding the existing defence line by maintaining or changing the standard of defence.
  - Advance the line – building new defences seaward of the existing defence line.
  - Managed realignment – allowing or enabling the shoreline to move (building new defences and breaching the old, for example).
  - No active intervention – no investment in coastal defences or operations.
- 5.4 The Plan recognises that defences are under pressure at Canewdon West, Barling Marshes and Great Wakering and in these areas of the district there is a need to hold existing alignments.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The endorsement of the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 2 will ensure the continued best management of the Districts Shoreline, and continued protection of residential dwellings from flooding.

## **7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The requirements for endorsing the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 2 can be met from existing resources.

**8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The legal implications of endorsing the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 2 are that the Councils position in terms of flood defences in the District will be strengthened. Failure to endorse the SMP2 will result in a less strategic approach to flood defences in the District.

**9 RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** that the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2010) be endorsed as the overarching framework for flood defences in the District in compliance with the Habitats Regulation Assessment.

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**Background Papers:-**

Essex and Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 2 – October 2010.

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