

SMP 3c Summary of Principles And Objectives

Use of Objectives and Establishing Principles for Policy Development

Introduction

General Principle of Sustainability.

A fundamental aim of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) process is to identify sustainable management of the coast, with choice of policy for management of risk underpinning this aim. An acknowledged difficulty in this is in understanding what is meant by sustainability.

As an overall principle it is adequate to take the definition provided by the original 1987 statement of sustainable development: *“development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*, subsequently amended and adopted in the Defra SMP guidance, in relation to defence management policy as avoiding: *“tying future generations into inflexible and expensive options for defence.”*

While this provided an initial intent, encapsulating the long term view being taken by the first review of the Shoreline Management Plan, it has to be realised that such a definition lacks (quite correctly, given its context) specific guidance as to the day to day, area by area management of individual sections of the coast or of risk. It is essential, therefore, to interpret this in relation to the actual situations that exist and the future that is envisaged.

The weakness in all high level discussion of sustainability is the inherent lack of focus on what it is that is to be sustained: the natural processes, the ecological systems and interests, the investment in the built environment and future economic generation or, more specifically still, a type of habitat, residential properties or a listed historical structure.

Sustainability can be seen as having two aspects, that in terms of the effort or input required to deliver an outcome and that in terms of the detriment or benefit in delivering that outcome. The first is a function of the degree of anticipated coastal change (the pressure resulting from changing the coastal form, such as resisting erosion), the second a function of what it is about the coast that is valued, and, in the longer term, the vision of what is wanted of the coast. This review sets out to examine and identify those values, the issues determining the need for management. These issues are identified:

- From earlier studies; such as the current Shoreline Management Plan, strategies and scheme appraisals;
- From the first round of stakeholder meetings and discussion with the Representative Members (RMF) and the Client Steering Group (CSG);
- From a review of the various policy documents, structure or local plans.

The manner in which these issues are then incorporated within the review development process is in terms of objectives, against which appropriate risk management policy may be tested; the objectives relating to specific features of the coast. However, these have

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to be assessed at a local level in the context of a broader vision of what is required of the coast, or how the coast may behave.

Considering the two aspects of sustainability but taking this initially solely from a perspective of sustainability of management effort or input, allowing the coast to behave in an unconfined manner (naturally) will always be the most sustainable approach. Where there are no issues, there is no need for management; the policy of no intervention is inherently sustainable. This “no issue, no management” provides the prime tenet for the development of coastal policy. This also aligns well with the intent of the Water Framework Directive, in its effort to restore a natural integrity of water bodies unless very good reason for intervention.

In other areas, where there are issues, the appropriate policy may still be for no active intervention, in that intervention, even when working generally with natural processes, will impose a degree of pressure or tension within the natural process system, which will require future effort to manage. The pressure and hence the management effort, may increase in the future, either as the coast continues to evolve and becomes less coherent or as potential climate change imposes a new response in the coast. In such areas it may be appropriate to abandon the issue/feature or to create opportunity for such a feature to change with change in the shoreline shape; rather than a feature forcing change in the shape of the coast to sustain the feature.

There are, however, other issues or features relating to the coast, which cannot adapt or be adapted and which would, through their loss, have a detrimental impact from a perspective of sustainability of other aspects of importance to the coastal environment (natural, social, cultural and built).

Achieving the correct balance between these two aspects is essential in assessing sustainability, ensuring that we are not tying future generations into inflexible and expensive options for defence but also ensuring that we are able to pass on those things which future generations will value.

Principles and Objectives.

The SMP guidance indicates the following process for setting objectives:

- Develop objectives for each feature in the theme review (task 2.4)
- Prioritise objectives within themes - specific approach at the discretion of the CSG (task 2.6)
- Identify key policy drivers - features with associated objectives likely to have overriding influence (task 3.1a)

The Suffolk Coast is varied in its behaviour and its natural and built environments. The Issues/Features/Objective tables, developed with the Client Steering Group and Representative Members, identify the important aspects that need to be considered, but at a very specific level.

The Theme Review reports on these features from the point of view of each Theme (such as the natural environment, built environment, recreation). However, as highlighted in the various discussions over issues and objectives, this does not fully capture the character of each area and the Theme Review goes on to develop a broader discussion of different sections of the coast, attempting to encapsulate how these

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specific objectives interact. This is discussed and developed in the individual characterisation of areas attached to this document.

Underlying principles and high level objectives have been developed for areas of the Suffolk Coast, quite specific to these individual areas. These key principles and high level objectives will influence the development of policy; in effect providing the key drivers. The division of the coast in this manner is not intended to define policy units. Neither is the division intended to be rigorous, in that there is inevitable leakage of or interaction between areas of the coast.

The aim of this paper is to agree an approach and establish these overall principles and drivers within the CSG such that this may be taken forward to the RMF for confirmation. The approach to this SMP builds on that initiated through the North East Coastal Authorities Group (NECAG) SMP2, which has now been fully approved by the relevant local authorities and the EA, and that which is being developed for the Wash.

Discussion of the Approach

The two SMP areas above have different needs and different coastlines. The NECAG area is characterised by large centres of population separated quite distinctly by long lengths of natural coast and strong geological features cutting across the natural processes. There are, however, similarities, in that the coastline changes in places quite subtly from areas with predominantly human drivers to areas characterised by important ecological function, with significant interaction between the two. There are, as in Suffolk, sections of high tourism value and local activity which depend on the naturalness of the coast as part of the overall value.

In the Wash, there is little hard geology separating or dominating the shoreline and the system has to be seen as a whole. However, the interactions along the coast are relatively weak (with the exception of the river outfalls) with the interaction between defences and coastal function is more cross-shore (saltmarsh and embankments protecting large areas of low lying land). This is similar to sections of the Suffolk coast but at a different scale.

The approach taken within NECAG was very much taking lengths of the coast and defining specific principles and overarching objectives within each area. This approach developed further from the experience within the Wash is proposed for the Suffolk Coast following discussion with the CSG.

Generic Objectives

The following overall generic objectives are proposed. It should be noted that these objectives have been set out in no particular order.

- To avoid the loss of life through flooding;
- To contribute to a sustainable and integrated approach to land use planning;
- To avoid damage to and enhance the natural heritage;
- To support the cultural heritage;
- To protect people's homes from flooding and loss through erosion;
- To protect the local economy;

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- To support adaptation by the local coastal communities;
- To maintain or enhance the high quality landscape; and
- To minimise reliance on defence.

The last of these generic objectives can essentially be achieved, providing that all of the previous objectives are met within the policies set out in the Shoreline Management Plan.

The high level objectives are developed for each area of the coast aiming to provide guidance in developing policy and in evaluating and prioritising specific objectives developed through consultation in relation to the overall intent of management, specific policy units and management areas. The detailed development of these aggregated objectives is presented area by area in the appendix to this document.

Within each area, the frontage is described together with a summary of coastal behaviour and a discussion of how coastal management may interact across each area. Based on this and taking account of the specific objectives developed in the Issues tables the key values of the area are derived. Essential and integrated objectives are then presented with the aim of these objectives being to deliver the key values.

As stated earlier, the division of the coast at this time in the development of the Shoreline Management Plan, is to aid understanding of the specific issues and objectives; to provide a broader level context. It is not intended to imply a division in terms of the final policy nor is it intended to imply that there is no interaction, either physically (coastal processes) or in terms of social, economic or ecological function between areas. The inclusion of various frontages within an area, therefore, aims to group such frontages that have strong connections or overall values that can then be drawn together. In some areas this is quite evident; areas such as Felixstowe or Lowestoft are obvious centres. In other areas, such as Aldeburgh, thought has gone into the different aspects up and down the coast which all add to the overall character and value of the area. This has resulted in the inclusion of Orfordness and the surrounding countryside and estuary within the Aldeburgh Area. In the case of Southwold, there is an obvious need to include the Blyth and the harbour and by implication, therefore, Walberswick. Taking account of the consultation responses and recognising, therefore, the clear value of the coast south of Walberswick, to Walberswick, Dunwich is also included within this area.

It is recognised that other boundaries could have been drawn and there has had to be a balance between splitting the coast too closely; missing aspects that add to the overall value, and dividing the coast too coarsely; disguising the individual character of different sections. The aim is to help understand what it is about the coast that is valued and, therefore, requires consideration when developing actual coastal policy. This is still underpinned by the identification of the individual objectives in the features and objective tables. As all aspects of the SMP are developed; looking at the way in which ideas and different management scenarios develop in detail, the significance of specific issues and the values which are affected will require an on-going review. This current document aims to provide an initial high level framework for taking the SMP forward to this more detail stage.

The key values and the high level objectives for each area are provided as a summary in the following sheets. Reference can be made to the appendix which provides the

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background to these broad level objectives. Development of these broad level objectives does not replace the more detailed issues, features and objectives developed through consultation and presented in table format on the SMP2 website. The aim of the High Level Objectives is in drawing these more specific issues together, providing the broader context with which they may be considered in developing policy.

The Use of Words

Inevitably, when attempting to summarise quite complex issues as succinct objectives, certain words are used which are open to interpretation. The most obvious example of this is sustainability. The concept of sustainability is discussed above as being judgment on the effort needed to deliver an outcome and the benefit of that outcome. A brief discussion of other words used in the document is provided below.

Integrated. – an approach which attempts to take all issues and interests into account. By adopting this approach, management of one issue adds value to the manner in which another is dealt with.

To maintain – is used to imply that a certain feature is not allowed to deteriorate.

To enhance – implies that opportunity is sought to actually increase the value of a feature.

To sustain. – is used in relation to some function of a feature, where there may be change but, within that change, that function is not allowed to fail. In effect that use or value is kept alive.

Adaptation – implies that there may be some actual change in the way a feature, such as a habitat or a community, functions. In supporting adaptation, management has to recognise certain principles:

- That adaptation may take time and may evolve slowly so that change to the overall community does not happen immediately.
- That management should not encourage a progressively more vulnerable situation to develop, where there is a sudden change from one condition to another.
- That specific aspects of a feature, such as individual properties or elements of habitat may change or be lost, but without substantial loss to the value of the community or the overall ecological function of feature.

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Area 1 summary: Lowestoft - Gunton to Pakefield Hall

Chainage - 4km – 10.5km

Key Values

Lowestoft is an important regional centre and tourist destination. Within a strongly managed environment, the key values vary along the shoreline from the highly developed commercially important area to the north and around the harbour, through the high value amenity frontage of South Beach of significant importance to the local tourism economy through its “Blue Flag” status, to the less formal Pakefield beach, with each section adding value to the overall character. The historic and extensive residential areas in south Lowestoft are dependent also on effective management of the beach and defences.

In particular, with the economic regeneration of the harbour, areas behind the Esplanade and residential areas to the south of the pier, this is heavily reliant upon appropriate management of the beach and promenade of South Beach. Additionally, the associated economic support derived from the harbour and the area immediately to the north means that shoreline management has to take account of overall and interrelated impacts on each of these areas. Further to this, Pakefield has a distinct character and value which provides a transition to a more natural coastline to the south.



High level objectives

- To maintain and enhance Lowestoft as a viable commercial centre and tourist destination in a sustainable manner;
- To maintain critical transport links;
- To manage and reduce flood and erosion risk to the commercial area to the north of the harbour;
- To protect the commercial and recreational use of the harbour from flood and erosion risk;
- To enhance regeneration opportunities to the area around Lowestoft South Beach;
- To enhance the overall amenity of the frontage in general and in particular Lowestoft South Beach and the open area behind;
- To maintain the more informal character of Pakefield, including important cultural heritage;
- To maintain the geological value of Pakefield Cliffs; and
- To promote ways to maintain access to the coastal path.

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Area 2 summary: **Kessingland and Covehithe - Kessingland to Easton Broad**

Chainage 10.5km – 21km


Key Values

Although in detail the area may be seen as the two distinct areas of Kessingland village and the Covehithe length of eroding cliffs and broads, there is both direct linkage both in terms of management and also overall character. The dominant theme is maintaining the varied but natural character of the area, within which there is a need to **sustain** tourism, existing facilities, coastal use, the natural environment and communities. The regeneration of Kessingland is a key component of this as are the strengths of agriculture and the local community infrastructure. This combination of key values is summarised as:



- Kessingland as a coastal town and tourist destination;
- The transport link from Kessingland to Lowestoft (A12);
- The strategic gap which delineates Kessingland from Lowestoft;
- Recreational use of the foreshore area;

- The agricultural economy;
- Community infrastructure;
- Cultural heritage; and
- The national and international importance of the biological and geological diversity of the coastline.



All of which are within a broader environmental value of the natural coast represented by:

- A highly dynamic and rapidly changing natural coastline;
- A wide range of interdependent coastal brackish and freshwater habitats in the marshes and lagoons to the south of Kessingland; and
- The significant archaeological and geological features of the coast.

High level objectives

- To maintain Kessingland as a viable commercial centre and tourist destination in a sustainable manner;
- To maintain a transport link from Lowestoft to Kessingland and throughout the area;
- To maintain a range of recreational activities along the foreshore;
- To support adaptation of the rural industry and communities;
- To maintain or enhance coastal biodiversity and geological features in a favourable

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condition, in the context of a dynamic coastal environment;

- To promote ways to maintain access to coastal path; and
- To support appropriate ecological adaptation of habitats, in particular the important Easton Broad National Nature Reserve.

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Area 3 summary: Southwold and the Blyth Valley - Easton Bavents to Dunwich Cliffs

Chainage 21km – 30.5km

Key Values



The overall values within this area are made up of a complexity of interrelated and interlinked issues, leading to potential conflicts but also opportunity for mutual benefit between individual sectors of interest. Underlying these individual elements are the internationally and nationally important aspects of the area:

- The Southwold / Walberswick / Dunwich area as a nationally valued destination for heritage and tourism;
- The national and international importance of the wide range of interdependent coastal, brackish and freshwater habitat in the cliffs, marshes, mudflats, lagoons and beaches of the coast and estuary; and
- The important characteristic landscape.

Within these broader values, specific values are seen in:

- Southwold and Walberswick as coastal towns and tourist destinations, integral with the historic and functional aspects of the harbour and associated tourism activities and attractions within the broader area;
- Dunwich as a heritage centre and tourist destination;
- Recreational use of the harbour and foreshore area including the Blue Flag beach at Southwold;
- Geological interest and habitat in the cliffs (to the north of Southwold and south of Dunwich);
- The semi-natural and natural landscape; and
- Environmentally valuable areas of Dingle and Westwood Marshes.



High level objectives

- To maintain Southwold and Walberswick as viable commercial centres and tourist destinations in a sustainable manner;
- To sustain recreational activities on and around beaches and associated facilities;
- To maintain the cultural value of Southwold and the Blyth Valley;
- To maintain the character, commercial and recreational activities and navigation to Southwold harbour and associated area;
- To maintain the regional transport link and transport links throughout the area;
- To support adaptation of agricultural interest;
- To support adaptation by the local coastal communities, including Dunwich;
- To maintain or enhance coastal biodiversity and geological features in a favourable condition, in the context of a dynamic coastal environment; and
- To maintain and enhance the high quality landscape.

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Area 4 summary: Minsmere – Dunwich Cliff to Thorpeness

Chainage 30.5km – 40km

Key Values

The core value of the area is its natural environment, although clearly the presence of the power station has to be recognised. Areas such as the Dunwich Heath rely on the overall natural setting and the properties along the cliff top similarly benefit from this natural character of the coast. Sizewell village forms a locally important community but also acts as a way point and access to the shore and coastal path. The elements of the key values of the area may therefore be set out as:

- The relatively natural coastal habitat and landscape including the different aspects of the shingle beaches, marshes and wet grassland and Heathland;
- The national and international importance of the biological and geological interests of the coastline and hinterland;
- The nuclear power station at Sizewell; and
- Recreational use of the coastal area including the coastal path and access and facilities offered by Sizewell.



High level objectives

- To maintain the location and safe operation of Sizewell power station and any future development of the site;
- To maintain the tourism interest of this area;
- To maintain a range of recreational activities along the foreshore;
- To maintain or enhance coastal biodiversity and ecological functionality in the context of a dynamic coastal environment;
- To support appropriate ecological adaptation of this habitat and in particular the important RSPB Minsmere Bird Reserve;
- To support the adaptation of the Sizewell community to any change; and
- To promote ways to maintain access to the coastal path

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Area 5 summary: Aldeburgh – Thorpeness to North Weir Point

Chainage 40km – 62km

Key Values



The area demonstrates the need to balance the three integrated values of culture, ecology and economics. The strong cultural core is provided by Aldeburgh, Thorpeness, Snape, Orford and even Orford Ness. These strong traditional characteristics provide a core to sustaining communities and encouraging future development, which is underpinned by a wide amenity base from sailing to walking, beach use and by the strong tourism, agricultural and (more limited) fishing industries. Equally important locally and regionally as well as with respect to the broader national value is the natural environment, from which the above values derive significant additional value. This combination of values is expressed below:

- Thorpeness as a coastal village and tourist destination;
- The North Warren RSPB reserve;
- Aldeburgh as a coastal town, artistic community and tourist destination;
- Recreational use of the coastal area including the sailing activity to the south of Aldeburgh and generally within the estuary;
- The remote nature and 'wilderness' experience afforded by Orfordness;
- Heritage values of the military installations on Orfordness; and
- The national and international importance of the biological and geological diversity of the coastline and estuaries, including vegetated shingle beaches, one of the largest shingle spits in the country and the estuarine areas of the rivers Ore, Alde and Butley.



High level objectives

- To maintain in a sustainable manner Thorpeness as viable coastal settlement and tourist destination recognising its cultural and heritage significance;
- To maintain Aldeburgh as viable commercial and tourism centre in a sustainable manner, recognising its cultural and heritage value;
- To maintain the cultural value of the Aldeburgh coastline;
- To maintain a range of recreational activities along the foreshore and within the estuary, including sailing and navigational access;
- To maintain Orfordness as a designated site of international and European importance;
- To support the adaptation of local coastal communities;

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- To maintain or enhance coastal biodiversity and geological features in a favourable condition, in the context of a dynamic coastal environment;
- To support appropriate ecological adaptation of habitats;
- To support the adaptation of the local coastal farming communities; and
- To promote ways to maintain access to the coastal path.

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Area 6 summary: Deben Estuary and North Felixstowe – Shingle Street to Felixstowe Golf Course Club House

Chainage 62km – 73km

Key Values

The area at the mouth of the Deben, including the North Felixstowe frontage, is an important amenity to the town of Felixstowe and a gateway to the more natural coastal environment to the north. Its significance goes beyond the local area, acting as an important tourist attraction for the region but also reflecting in Felixstowe Ferry an intrinsic value in terms of its unique combination of facilities, heritage and community. The same basic qualities are recognised in relation to Shingle Street, combining a spirit of living within a fundamentally natural location with strong community values.



The area between has a strong link to rural agricultural activity, supporting local communities. Overall the area has a range of coastal heritage features such as the Martello Towers and the more recent links to the military defence of the nation. The heritage, community and recreational attributes are all set within a broader context of important ecological and geological value. These overall values are reflected in specific features:



- The strong recreational value of Felixstowe Ferry, represented by sailing and water sports, the golf course, the start of the coastal path and the foot ferry itself;
- The strong community identity of Felixstowe Ferry, Shingle Street and other villages within the area;
- The tourism and recreational features of the North Felixstowe seafront;
- The Heritage value of the Martello Towers, the East Lane military defences and the historic use of Bawdsey Manor;
- The underpinning strength of agricultural activities, both within the Deben and along the coastal area;
- The national and international importance of the biological and geological diversity of the Deben Estuary; and
- Coastal and estuarine habitat, in addition to natural and semi-natural environment.

High level objectives

- To maintain the beach use of North Felixstowe;
- To maintain the overall and specific recreational features at the entrance to the Deben, such as the golf course and water sports;
- To support continued recreational use of the estuary;
- To maintain the character and community of Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey Ferry;
- To promote ways to maintain access to the coastal path;
- To maintain the core heritage value of the area;
- To support the adaptation of agricultural communities;
- To support the other rural communities within the area and the underpinning agricultural

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activities;

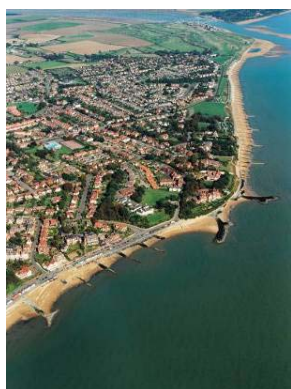
- To maintain transport links in the area;
- To support the adaptation of local coastal communities, such as Shingle Street, Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey; and
- To maintain or enhance coastal biodiversity and geological features in a favourable condition, in the context of a dynamic coastal environment.

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Area 7 summary: Felixstowe – Felixstowe Golf Course, Club House to Landguard Point

Chainage 73km – 84km

Key Values



Felixstowe is a regionally and nationally important economic centre and tourist destination, with recognised Blue Flag standards. This general value emphasises the integrated approach which will be when managing the coastal strip. The recent planning permission for the expansion of the Port and the Felixstowe Futures work reflect the aspirations of the Town to both regenerate itself and expand its economic and social role. The aspects to be considered include: regeneration; the development opportunities of the port and local commerce; reducing flood risk to core residential areas; enhancing the tourism opportunity; and maintaining and enhancing the limited areas of open

land and the natural ecological function of such areas. Many of these are built upon the heritage interest of the area. The values of the area are very much those of looking forward to what can be achieved rather than purely maintaining what exists within the area. The key values for coastal management are:

- Enhancing the defence function of the shoreline;
- Protecting the nationally important asset of the Port of Felixstowe;
- The importance of an accessible and sustainable beach, supported by core facilities and vibrant coastal zone, supporting in turn essential tourism and employment;
- The historical heritage;
- The limited but important natural areas; and
- The national importance of the biological and geological diversity of the Landguard Common SSSI.



High level objectives

- To improve Felixstowe as a viable commercial centre and tourist destination in a sustainable manner;
- To protect the Port of Felixstowe and provide opportunities for its development;
- To develop and maintain the Blue Flag beach;
- To provide a high standard of ongoing defence to the area;
- To maintain existing facilities essential in supporting ongoing regeneration;
- To integrate maintenance of coastal defence, while promoting sustainable development of the hinterland;
- To maintain the historical heritage of the frontage; and
- To maintain biological and geological features of Landguard Common SSSI in a favourable condition, in the context of a dynamic coastal environment.

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