

Suffolk Coastal District Council
Waveney District Council
Environment Agency

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

**FOR SEDIMENT SUB-CELL 3C
LOWESTOFT TO HARWICH**

May 1998

HALCROW



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1

INTRODUCTION

2

USE OF THE PLAN

3

EXISTING OBJECTIVES

4

MANAGEMENT POLICY

5

PROCESS UNIT BEN

6

PROCESS UNIT MIN

7

PROCESS UNIT ORF

8

PROCESS UNIT FEL

9

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

10

APPENDICES

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Index

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THE SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

SUBCELL 3c

LOWESTOFT TO HARWICH

CONTENTS

SECTION 1	INTRODUCTION
SECTION 2	USE OF THE PLAN
SECTION 3	EXISTING OBJECTIVES
SECTION 4	MANAGEMENT POLICY
SECTION 5	FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Glossary of Terms
Appendix B	References
Appendix C	Information Relating to Flood Levels, Chart Datum and Ordnance Datum

For Further Information see also:

Volume 1 Consultation Document	June 1995
Volume 2 Compilation of Data	June 1995
Volume 3 Figures and Maps	April 1995

Section 1

INTRODUCTION

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THE SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

SUBCELL 3c

LOWESTOFT TO HARWICH

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

- 1 BACKGROUND**
- 2 OBJECTIVES**
- 3 THE SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

From 1st April 1996, the National Rivers Authority (NRA) became the Environment Agency (EA). In response to this change, current NRA activities referred to in the text are those of the EA, whilst activities prior to the 1st April 1996 refer to those of the NRA.

BACKGROUND

The shoreline between Lowestoft and Harwich (see Figure 1.1) is covered by the administrative areas of Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and Waveney District Council (WDC) (see Figure 1.2). As Maritime District Councils under the Coast Protection Act 1949, these 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 National Rivers Authority (NRA) using powers under the Water Resources Act 1991, and the Land Drainage Act 1991. The respective areas of operational responsibility along the coast are shown in Figure 1.2. These operating authorities jointly appointed Sir William Halcrow and Partners (Halcrow) to produce this Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) for this coastline in accordance with the guidelines produced for coastal defence authorities by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), published in 1995.

A previous study of the coastlines of England and Wales, for 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 above operating authorities decided to produce a Shoreline Management Plan wherein all the conflicting needs and constraints are identified and considered.

A Shoreline Management Plan by definition is "a document which sets out a strategy for coastal defence for a specified length of coast taking account of natural coastal processes and human and other environmental influences and needs" (MAFF Guidance Note 1995). The aim is to provide the basis for sustainable coastal defence policies within the sediment sub-cell and set objectives for the future management of the shoreline. In the context of sub-cell 3c, the SMP will represent the most detailed document to date of coastal information relating to the Lowestoft to Harwich coastal zone. This document describes the issues raised by, and objectives of, those affected by coastal defence policy, the appraisal of coastal defence options for each Management Unit and the selection of the preferred policy for future coastal defence management. Together, these preferred options constitute the Shoreline Management Plan.

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OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this completed Shoreline Management Plan are as defined in the MAFF guidance notes. They are to:

- assess a range of strategic coastal defence options and agree a preferred approach;
- outline future requirements for monitoring, management of data and research related to the shoreline;
- inform the statutory planning process and related coastal zone planning;
- identify opportunities for maintaining and enhancing the natural coastal environment, taking account of any specific targets set by legislation or any locally set targets;
- set out arrangements for continued consultation with interested parties.

Notwithstanding these requirements, the following objectives and principles were identified as needing to be addressed during the development of the Shoreline Management Plan for Lowestoft to Harwich:

- assessment of how the shoreline, within the boundaries of the sub-cell, is behaving and how it may behave in the future, predicting the evolution of the coastline and the assets likely to be placed at risk;
- confirmation of the boundaries of the sub-cell;
- management of the sub-cell facilitated through the concept of Management Units, these being sub-divisions of the coastal frontage which exhibit coherent characteristics;
- the establishment of broad policies reflecting the natural coastal processes, human and environmental influences and needs: it is not the purpose of the SMP to produce a programme of works;
- embodiment of environmental and conservation issues: the SMP will be used to maintain and improve the natural environment;
- incorporation of the various socio-economic needs and aspirations of the human environment;
- attempt to reconcile conflicting needs so that the SMP consists of a set of shared objectives;
- develop a heightened public awareness of the overall behaviour of the coast and the influences they and others have on it;

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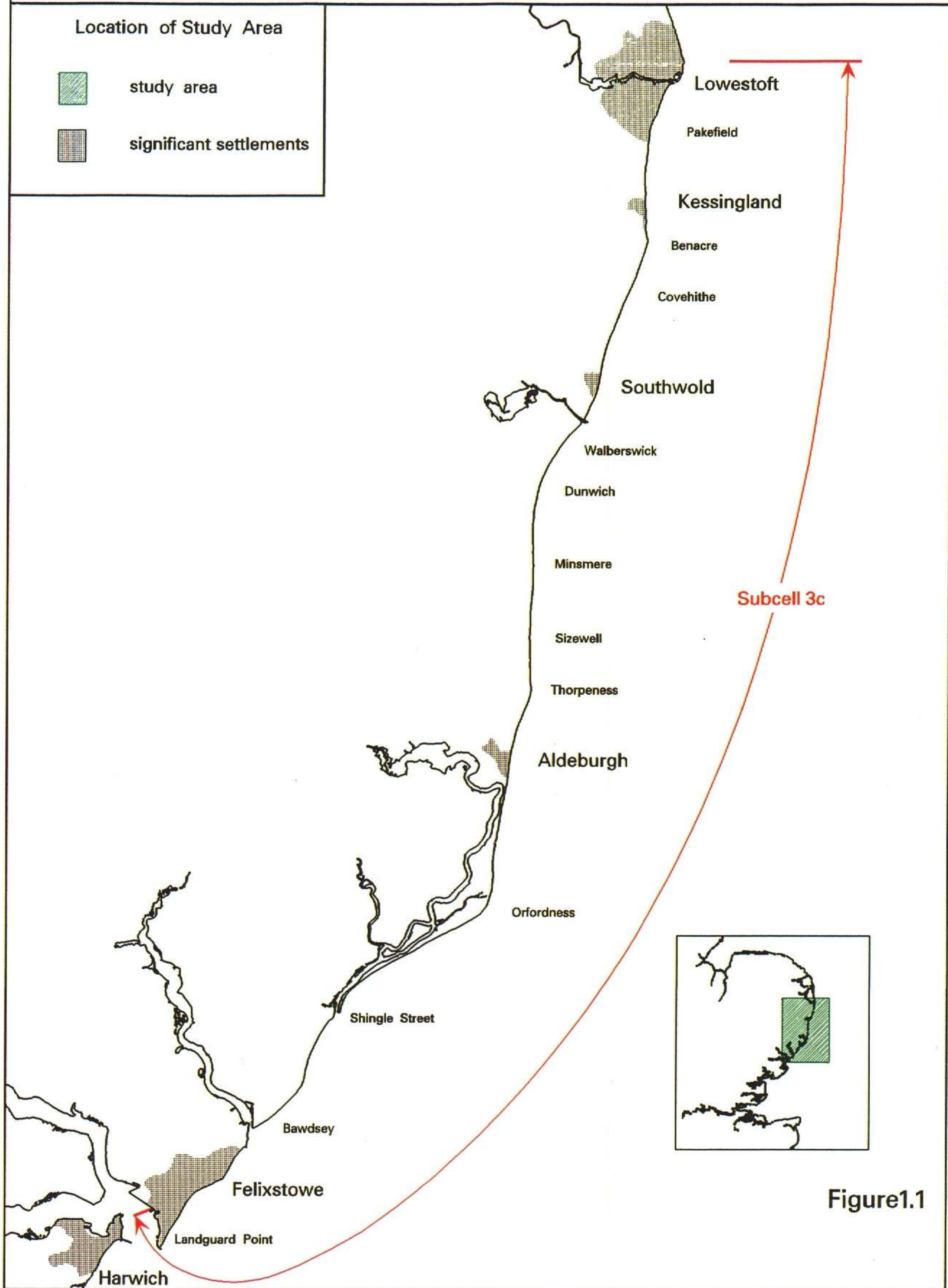


Figure 1.1 The Study Area

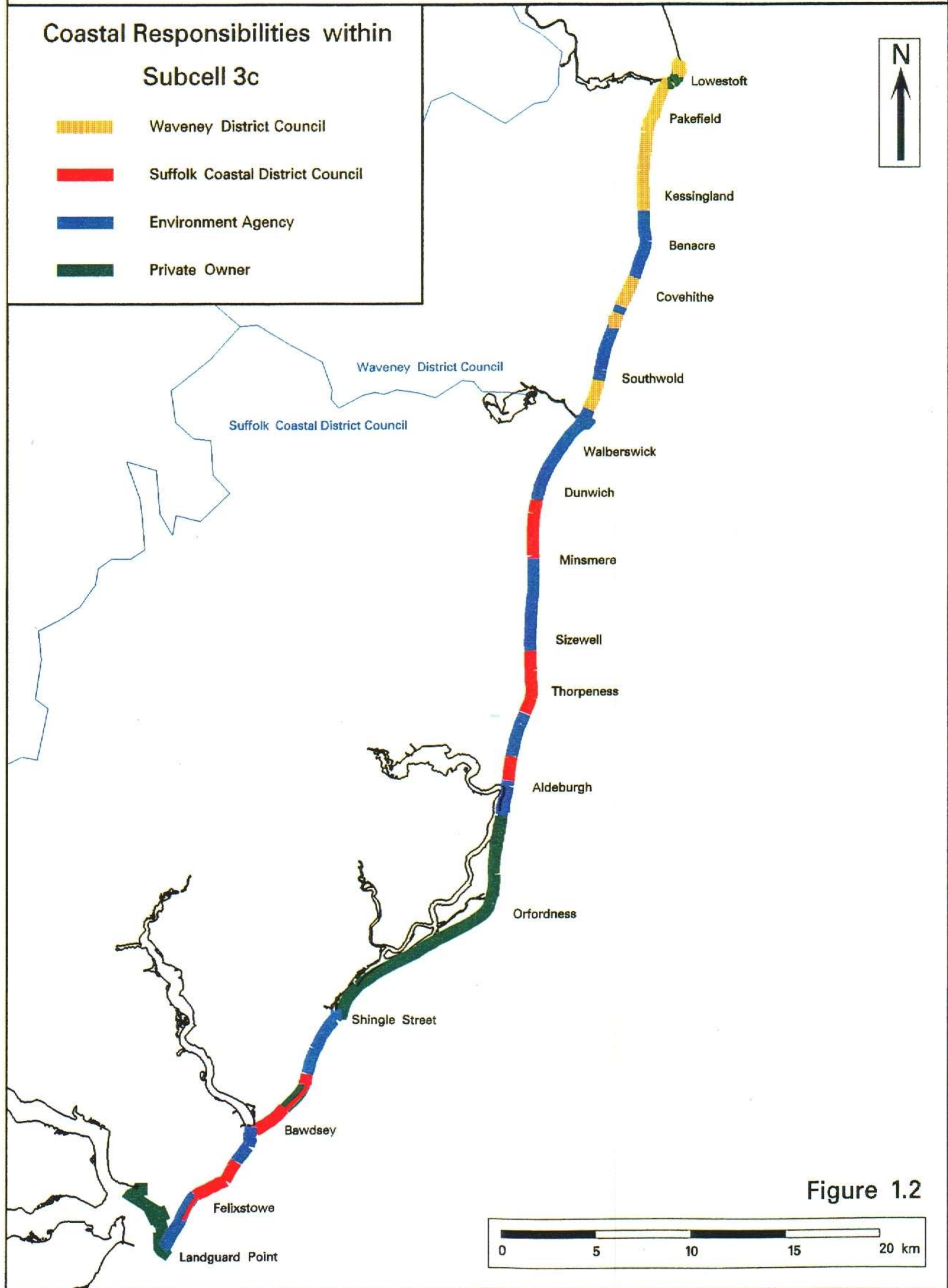


Figure 1.2 Lengths of Defence Responsibility

- facilitate liaison between operating authorities in this and neighbouring cells;
- facilitate production of works programmes;
- produce an SMP which, in both its physical form and in the ideas it presents, is a document capable of amendment and improvement as changing circumstances and awareness dictate: it is not a 'once and for all' document that is unchanging and unchangeable.

It should be noted that the SMP is not itself intended to define or provide the precise means of achieving the adopted policy for the defence or management of any length of the coast. Rather, it represents a statement of what it is considered would be most appropriate in the light of all identified natural and human interests, taking account of what, within the context of available data, is believed to be feasible. Prior to implementation each management or defence policy will require detailed examination and analysis, in every case following (as far as the Operating Authorities are concerned) the MAFF Flood and Coastal Defence Project Appraisal Guidance Note (PAGN).

3

THE SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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, now recognised and they do have some statutory backing, as there is an increasing link between the availability of MAFF grant aid for coastal defences and the existence of a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). For the purpose of any non-statutory document, such as this SMP, suggestions and policy strategies for the future must consider the existing statutory planning system. It is also vital that the SMP focuses on all of the issues relative to the shoreline within the geographical area concerned, to be considered operable as a stand alone document.

The first stage of the SMP development was 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. Having completed this stage it was important that the findings were summarised for individuals and organisations to comment upon prior to the development of management policies for the shoreline. The results of the first stage are contained in three volumes. Volume 1 is a Consultation Document and an interpretive summary of the main issues for this shoreline. This volume also contains details of the division of sub-cell 3c into Process Units and Management Units. Volume 2 -Compilation of Data and Volume 3 - Figures and Maps contain all of the individual studies and reports undertaken for this SMP. These appraise in detail the present condition and future position of the shoreline and coastal zone. These volumes also provide detailed appendices of background data.

Stage 2, the final SMP, has been developed from the Stage 1 studies, formalising the division of the shoreline into appropriate Management Units and establishing policies for each. This final SMP is a non-statutory working document which can 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 continually incorporated into the SMP. Such an approach will reconfirm the existing coastal defence policy or advocate a change to a new strategic 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 Section 4, 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 Notes should be re-iterated, that is "...to provide the basis for sustainable coastal defence policies....", ie not to prescribe how each length of shoreline will be defended.

Although it is the operating authorities which hold the relevant statutory powers relating to coastal defences, the policies adopted have been formulated following wide consultation, taking account of the objectives of the consultees. As a consequence, it will not be in every case appropriate for either or both of the operating authorities alone to implement the required management measures once they have been identified.

The format of this SMP document has been created to act as a base document for shoreline management within sub-cell 3c. The intention is that the document is used as a whole, but individual sections (eg any particular Process Unit) can be easily extracted as a stand alone document. 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, with revision to parts of the document rather than complete re-issue.

The following sections describe the framework of the SMP for future strategic management purposes along with guidance on how this document is to be used. Detailed information on each Management Unit and the development of the management policy provides the main section of this document, with recommendations for future monitoring, the need for further studies and the procedure for reviewing the SMP contained at the end.