

# Jurassic Coast Pathfinder Spatial Planning Research Project

Final Report

Prepared for Dorset County Council  
by  
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# 1 Background to the Study

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Land Use Consultants (LUC) was commissioned by Dorset County Council in March 2011 to carry out research into the role of the spatial planning system in addressing coastal change along the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The work has been carried out as part of the Dorset and East Devon Coastal Change Pathfinder project, which provides funding to coastal authorities to explore new ways of adapting to coastal change.
- 1.2 Defra launched the £11 million Coastal Change Pathfinder fund in June 2009, inviting local authorities to bid for resources to improve community engagement in the process of planning to adapt to coastal change. Through the Coastal Change Pathfinder programme, Defra and the Environment Agency are looking for innovative solutions to the challenges of coastal change and good practice which can be promoted nationwide.
- 1.1 Fifteen coastal authorities were successful in their bids for funding, including Dorset County Council (along with Devon County Council and other partners in Dorset and Devon) and have become Coastal Change Pathfinder authorities who will explore new ways of adapting to coastal change. The programme of work was programmed to run until spring 2011 and covers exploring new approaches to planning for, and managing, adaptation to coastal change in partnership with local communities.
- 1.2 The overall purpose of the Jurassic Coast Pathfinder project is to engage with coastal communities about adapting to coastal change through planning, and to ensure that these communities are well-equipped to understand and take part in the decision making processes involved in managing coastal change. The Jurassic Coast Pathfinder project is working towards seven aims which will be achieved through the implementation of a range of activities. The seventh aim, which provides the context for this study, is to work towards achieving *‘a spatial planning system which is well-equipped to reconcile the potential conflicts between a sustainable approach to coastal change on the one hand, and onshore/offshore development pressures on the other’*.

## STUDY AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.3 This study contributes to the overall purpose of the Jurassic Coast Pathfinder project by examining how and where the issue of coastal change can be addressed through spatial planning, and where this may conflict with other planning objectives. It also makes recommendations on how the spatial planning system can best deal with dynamic coastal change.
- 1.4 Six communities on the Jurassic Coast were chosen as the focus for the Pathfinder (and are therefore also the focus of this report), because they are all due to be affected by a change in management policy as set out in the draft Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2). These communities are:
  - Sidmouth
  - Charmouth

- Seatown
  - Preston Beach Road, Weymouth
  - Ringstead
  - North Swanage
- 1.5 There are five specific questions that this report aims to address through reference to both national best practice and the particular circumstances pertaining to the six pathfinder communities along the Jurassic Coast:
- a) How does the spatial planning system currently provide for sustainable adaptation to coastal change?
  - b) How can the risk of coastal change best be managed through the spatial planning system?
  - c) Is this being done already and if so, where and how?
  - d) What action can central and local government take to ensure that spatial planning at all scales takes account of future coastal change into the long-term?
  - e) How might the implementation of the Localism Bill and proposals for Neighbourhood Planning support or conflict with a strategic approach to the management of coastal change?

## **OVERVIEW OF PROJECT METHODOLOGY**

- 1.6 The first stage of the project was to establish what the existing national, regional and local policy framework is in relation to planning for coastal change in England. The various components of the policy framework at each level - including legislation, policy statements, plans and strategies and designations - were set out in a 'conceptual map' in order to illustrate the linkages and relationships between them.
- 1.7 The next stage was to examine national examples of best practice where coastal change issues have been embedded in local planning policy. The four authorities highlighted as best practice examples include Pathfinder authorities and others that became apparent through desk-based research. Policies and strategies relating to coastal change in each area were extracted into a matrix and the key elements of good practice were summarised, with specific policy examples being highlighted.
- 1.8 The key coastal change risks facing each of the six Jurassic Coast Pathfinder communities were then identified from a review of the two relevant Shoreline Management Plans and supplemented with information from Dorset County Council's earth science manager and a representative from the Environment Agency. The material gathered was summarised in order to establish a picture of the characteristics of each community, and the particular issues they face in relation to coastal change.
- 1.9 The existing planning policy framework affecting the six communities was reviewed with the purpose of comparing current or emerging policy with the key challenges facing the communities and establishing where gaps and opportunities exist. This involved reviewing the policy framework of the four

local authorities within which the six communities are located (East Devon, West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland and Purbeck).

- 1.10 Later in the project, a workshop was held with planning officers from each of the four authorities and representatives from Dorset County Council, the Environment Agency and Dorset AONB. During the workshop, stakeholders discussed the key issues that this project seeks to address (see **Appendix I** for the detailed workshop agenda listing the issues discussed and attendees). The outcomes of the workshop fed into this report, in particular our key conclusions and recommendations in Chapters 6 and 7.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.11 This section has provided background information to the study and a summary of the method used. The following chapters describe the distinct stages of work that have been undertaken (Chapters 2 to 5), and the key findings in relation and recommendations (Chapter 6) as follows:
- **Chapter 2:** Review of Policy Framework and Statutory Roles
  - **Chapter 3:** Identification of National Best Practice Examples
  - **Chapter 4:** Identification of Coastal Change Risks Affecting the Six Communities
  - **Chapter 5:** Review of Spatial Policies Affecting the Six Communities
  - **Chapter 6:** Planning for Sustainable Adaptation to Coastal Change: Key Conclusions
  - **Chapter 7:** Recommendations



## 2 Review of Policy Framework and Statutory Roles

- 2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the existing legislative framework, planning policy framework and statutory roles relating to coastal change adaptation. Their relevance to the Jurassic Coast is noted. The diagram at the end of this chapter graphically represents the linkages between legislation, policy and designations relating to coastal change and how they fit within different geographical scales and elements of the spatial planning system. Since this diagram was prepared, the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Strategy has been published<sup>1</sup>, which includes a similar, very useful diagram also showing roles and responsibilities of government departments, agencies, local authorities and major infrastructure owners.
- 2.2 A detailed review of the specific local policies relating to coastal change which affect each of the six communities is provided later in this report (**Chapter 5**).

### RELEVANT NATIONAL LEGISLATION

- 2.3 Archived material from the Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) website<sup>2</sup> stated that: prior to the Marine and Coastal Access Act, arrangements for co-ordinating activities in estuaries and other coastal areas were complex and at times, inconsistent. There was no single overall piece of coastal legislation or management mechanism in the UK. On land, local authorities have a key responsibility for planning; and at sea, management mainly falls to central government departments (e.g. Defra and the Environment Agency). As a result, the Government recognised that in order to manage the coast in a more sustainable manner, improvements were necessary in the co-ordination between management mechanisms and communication between parties with coastal interests.

#### Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

- 2.4 The UK Government introduced new systems of marine planning across the UK through the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and proposed legislation in Northern Ireland. The new legislation was the first step towards a co-ordinated UK marine law together with a new marine planning system and marine conservation powers. The new Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is an executive non-departmental public body that will carry out planning functions for English waters.
- 2.5 The Marine and Coastal Access Act creates a strategic marine planning system that covers inshore and offshore areas and clarifies the Government's marine objectives and priorities for the future. The first stage of the marine planning system was the preparation of a marine policy statement (MPS) to create a more integrated approach to marine management and setting short

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding the risks, empowering communities, building resilience. The national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England. Defra and Environment Agency, 23 May 2011.

<sup>2</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101109165532/http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/legislation/mcaa/key-areas.htm>

and longer-term objectives for sustainable use of the marine environment, as the framework for preparing Marine Plans. The second stage will be the creation of a series of Marine Plans covering defined inshore and offshore areas, which will implement the national marine policy statement in specific areas, using information about spatial uses and needs in those areas. The first areas to have Marine Plans will be the East Inshore and East Offshore areas (from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe). The Jurassic Coast will be covered by the Southern Inshore Marine Plan when it is prepared.

- 2.6 Marine Plans will make a significant contribution towards coastal integration. They will guide developers in establishing where they are likely to be able to carry out activities and where conditions or restrictions may be placed on what they do. The Marine and Coastal Access Act requires all public authorities taking authorisation or enforcement decisions that might affect the UK marine area to do so in accordance with Marine Plans and the MPS unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.7 In addition, the Marine and Coastal Access Act also enables improved access to the coast, through the creation of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast plus areas of spreading room, for example beaches, dunes and cliffs, where it is appropriate to do so.

### **Flood and Water Management Act 2010**

- 2.8 The Flood and Water Management Act provides for more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses, helps safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges and protects water supplies to the consumer.

### **Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy**

- 2.9 In addition, the Flood and Water Management Act required the preparation of a National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) strategy, which sets out how the Act will be implemented. The Environment Agency has therefore been working with Defra to develop a strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. The development of flood and coastal erosion risk management policy is led by Defra on behalf of the Government. Policy is prepared within the context of wider government policy areas led by other departments, for example, covering the use of public funds (Treasury), emergency response (Cabinet Office) and land-use planning (Department for Communities and Local Government). The Environment Agency and other organisations support this by providing evidence and advice.
- 2.10 The strategy, which was published on 23 May 2011, describes what needs to be done by all involved in flood and coastal risk management to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion, and to manage its consequences. Risk should be managed in a co-ordinated way within catchments and along the coast which balances the needs of communities, the economy and the environment. This strategy will form the framework within which communities have a greater role in local risk management decisions. It sets out the Environment Agency's national overview role for all sources of

flooding and coastal erosion and includes the delivery of flood and coastal erosion risk management activities on main rivers and the coast.

- 2.11 The strategy shows how communities can be more involved in local flood and coastal erosion risk management. It also emphasises the need to balance national and local activities and funding.
- 2.12 Flood and coastal erosion risk management represents a significant part of Defra's spending. Defra recently consulted on changes to the way funding will be allocated to flood and coastal defence projects, which Dorset County Council officers responded to.
- 2.13 Based on responses to the consultation, Defra has also just announced (23 May 2011) how capital funding will be allocated to individual projects in England from now on. Instead of meeting the full costs of just a limited number of schemes, the partnership approach to funding flood and coastal resilience means government money may be available towards the costs of any 'worthwhile' scheme. Funding levels will be based on the number of households protected, the damages being prevented, and the other benefits a project would deliver. Overall, more schemes are likely to go ahead than if the previous 'all or nothing' approach to funding were to continue.
- 2.14 However, the Dorset County Council officer response to the earlier consultation noted that it might be beneficial for an increasing proportion of the public funding currently made available for capital FCERM works to be diverted to support sustainable adaptation (e.g. rollback and buy-and-lease back). In this way, the overall aim of working with natural processes could be achieved, and communities can become more adaptable and resilient. In addition, it suggests that there will be many situations where the aspirations of a community for physical defence works cannot be met, e.g. where the engineering challenge is too great, or the environmental constraints are insurmountable. Therefore, the response recommends that an increasing proportion of FCERM funding should be directed to supporting communities with adaptation measures where defence is not an option.

#### **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

- 2.15 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 was introduced by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)). It substantially reformed the previous planning framework in the United Kingdom.
- 2.16 It both amended and repealed significant parts of the existing planning and compulsory purchase legislation in force at the time, including the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and introduced reforms such as the abolition of Local Plans and Structure Plans, and their replacement with Local Development Frameworks and Regional Spatial Strategies. Local planning authorities must prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF) which includes a set of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), in particular a Core Strategy, setting out the overall vision for the area and how the places within it should develop. The Core Strategy also includes:
  - Strategic objectives for the area focussing on the key issues to be addressed.

- A delivery strategy for achieving these objectives. This should set out how much development is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered. Locations for strategic development should be indicated on a key diagram.
  - Clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.
- 2.17 However, as discussed in more detail below, in 2010 the Coalition Government commenced a reform of the planning system, which is ongoing, and covers changes to national planning policy and the requirements for preparation of development plans by local authorities.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010**

- 2.18 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 came into force on 6 April 2010. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money obtained from new development planning applications can then be used to fund infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods have identified as being needed. Councils must spend income from the levy on infrastructure to support the development of the area but they can decide what infrastructure to spend it on and it can be different to that for which it was originally set. Authorities should set out on their website what they will use CIL for.
- 2.19 The levy applies to most new buildings. Authorities that wish to charge a levy need to develop and adopt a CIL charging schedule setting out how much levy will be applied to different sizes and types of development in their area. DCLG states<sup>3</sup> that the CIL gives local authorities the flexibility and freedom to set their own priorities for what the money should be spent on, as well as a predictable funding stream that allows them to plan ahead more effectively.
- 2.20 CIL enables local authorities to collect a levy from most developments, so even small amounts will add up to contribute to a good fund of money for new infrastructure. This differs from planning obligations (also known as section 106 agreements) which authorities can still seek to obtain through conditions on planning permissions for use on site specific mitigation and investment. The regulations introduced a number of reforms to scale back the use of planning obligations. From 2014, local authorities will not be able to pool more than five s.106 contributions to fund one particular infrastructure project.
- 2.21 When considering how to go about implementing and using CIL, the Planning Advisory Service<sup>4</sup> advises planners to look at their infrastructure delivery plans (part of the LDF) and consider what evidence is available to assist in creating a charging schedule and identify indicative infrastructure projects that could be funded through CIL. It also recommends collaborating with partners to allocate and prioritise spending.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/cilsummary>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelD=122677>

## NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 2.22 Current national planning policy for planning and the environment is set out in Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).
- 2.23 In recognition of the pressing issue of accelerating coastal change, in summer 2009, the previous Government consulted on a national coastal change policy. A study of local authority activities in relation to managing the impacts of coastal change was also published at this time<sup>5</sup>. This study gathered evidence to inform and support the delivery of Defra's new policy on coastal change, and some of the key findings are outlined below:
- Local authorities identified three potential national policy gaps:
    - A resettlement policy which may include several dimensions such as a consistent policy framework or guidance, compensation, and / or funding for local authorities to enable these processes.
    - Consideration for the removal of redundant sea defences.
    - Policy and programme support for ad hoc initiatives associated with supporting local economic development and regeneration.
  - There is a potential lack of mainstreaming of the coastal change agenda across local authority services, possibly because in many areas the impacts are not yet being felt. This may result in sub-optimal, reactive policy responses only once the impacts begin rather than proactive responses considered at an earlier date.
  - Coastal change presents challenges for local authorities in planning for the impacts well as delivering potentially competing objectives such as economic regeneration and environmental management/conservation.

### Planning Policy Statement 25 Supplement: Development and Coastal Change

- 2.24 In March 2010, DCLG published a supplement to Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Coastal Change) which attempted to address the findings of the above study and the outcomes of consultations. It replaced the policy on managing the impacts of coastal erosion set out in Planning Policy Statement 20: Coastal Planning.
- 2.25 The Government's aim, as set out in the PPS25 Supplement, is 'to ensure that our coastal communities continue to prosper and adapt to coastal change'. This means that planning should:
- Ensure that policies and decisions in coastal areas are based on an understanding of coastal change over time.
  - Prevent new development from being put at risk from coastal change by:
    - (i) avoiding inappropriate development in areas that are vulnerable to coastal change or any development that adds to the impacts of physical changes to the coast, and

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<sup>5</sup> *Understanding Local Authority Activities in Relation to Managing the Impacts of Coastal Change*. Scott Wilson for Defra, June 2009.

- (ii) directing development away from areas vulnerable to coastal change.
  - Ensure that the risk to development which is exceptionally necessary in coastal change areas (because it requires a coastal location and provides substantial economic and social benefits to communities) is managed over its planned lifetime.
  - Ensure that plans are in place to secure the long term sustainability of coastal areas.
- 2.26 The PPS25 Supplement sets out two key mechanisms through which the planning system could facilitate coastal adaptation at the regional and local scales. Policy DCC2 requires that the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy should identify where communities impacted by coastal change may need to be relocated and in the context of coastal change, areas in which growth should be avoided. Under policy DCC3, local authorities are required to identify areas likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast and refer to this area as the Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA). Local planning authorities should then set out the type of development that will be appropriate within the CCMA and allocate land within it for appropriate development. Where development and infrastructure needs to be relocated from within CCMA's, local planning authorities should make provision for sufficient, suitable land outside those areas, e.g. through rollback.

## **PLANNING SYSTEM REFORM**

- 2.27 The status of PPS25 and its supplement is now uncertain. The Coalition Government is reviewing current national planning policy with a view to consolidating the existing policy statements, circulars and guidance documents into a single National Planning Framework covering all forms of development and setting out national economic, environmental and social priorities.
- 2.28 In addition, with the publication of the Localism Bill in December 2010, the Coalition Government has introduced fundamental changes to the spatial planning system. Firstly, the Bill provides for Regional Spatial Strategies to be revoked and for strategic planning at the regional scale to cease. Secondly, through the introduction of neighbourhood planning, the intention is that communities should shape local areas. Specifically, if local people vote in favour of neighbourhood plans in local referenda, councils will have to adopt them so long as they are in accordance with the Core Strategy. The Bill also brings important changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy, including the requirement that a proportion of funds should be passed to the neighbourhoods in which the development has taken place.

## **SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

- 2.29 The Environment Agency uses government funding to reduce the risk to coastal communities, their property, infrastructure and the natural environment. Decisions on where to defend the coast from erosion are based on risk assessment using a transparent, auditable and understandable process, which starts with developing preferred management options in a long-term Shoreline Management Plan.

2.30 Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are produced by a non-statutory planning process overseen by Defra and delivered by local authorities in partnership with the Environment Agency. They provide a large-scale assessment of the physical risks associated with coastal processes and present a long term policy framework for reducing these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner. SMPs are usually developed through consultation with local communities and are based on the best available science relating to climate change and coastal processes. Coastal groups, made up primarily of coastal authorities and other bodies with coastal defence interests, provide a forum for discussion and co-operation and play an important part in the development of SMPs for their area.

2.31 There are two SMPs within the Jurassic Coast: the first covering the coastline from Hurst Point to Durlston Head (including North Swanage, also referred to as Poole and Christchurch Bays); and the second from Durlston Head to Rame Head (covering the other five communities). Within these SMPs the coast is divided up into smaller sections ‘policy units’ and the risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment from coastal change are defined for the next century. For each policy unit, the SMP identifies preferred policies for managing those risks. The options for these shoreline management policies are defined by Defra as:

<b>Hold the line</b>	Maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by defences.
<b>Advance the line</b>	Build new defences seaward of the existing defence line.
<b>Managed realignment</b>	Allow retreat of the shoreline, with management to control or limit movement.
<b>No active intervention</b>	A decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences.

2.32 While the SMPs make recommendations for building and maintaining coastal defences and other actions, implementation will depend on available funding. The Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP website notes that there is no guarantee that such funding will be forthcoming. Funding may be available from the national flood and coastal erosion risk management budget, but it could also come from other national sources or from local and/or third party funding.

2.33 As noted above, SMPs are non-statutory plans, i.e. they are not required to be prepared by law and public bodies are not required to follow policies that they prepare. However, Government has made clear that “*Integrating SMPs in the planning process will ensure that they (i) provide the basis for regional strategies and local spatial plans, and (ii) will clarify they are material considerations for planning applications in coastal areas*”<sup>6</sup>.

2.34 In practice it has been recognised by the Environment Agency that SMPs are not always readily translated into spatial plans and as a result they do not

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<sup>6</sup> CLG (2010). Planning Policy Statement 25 Supplement: Development and Coastal Change. Practice Guide. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1499049.pdf>

properly influence spatial plans to reduce the risk of coastal flooding and / or erosion. A study was undertaken in 2009 by the Planning Cooperative<sup>7</sup> to look at the relationship between SMPs and spatial plans (i.e. RSSs and Local Development Plan Documents) and how the links could be improved between these two plan-making regimes to the benefit of each and to coastal planning/management in general. This study made a number of recommendations that appear to have influenced the content of the PPS25 Supplement, and the requirement for local planning authorities to identify CCMAAs and consider rollback where development and infrastructure needs to be relocated from within CCMAAs. The PPS25 Supplement also states that local planning authorities on the coast should ensure that they have an evidence base at the appropriate scale and level of detail on the current and predicted impacts of physical changes to the coast to inform plan making, and that this evidence base should be drawn from SMPs and associated maps and data held by the Environment Agency.

## STRATEGIC COASTAL PARTNERSHIPS

- 2.35 While not statutory bodies, coastal partnerships exist in many parts of the UK. These make a valuable contribution to co-ordinating the activities of partner bodies including local authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- 2.36 The Dorset Coast Forum<sup>8</sup> is a strategic coastal partnership established in 1995, made up of over 220 public, private and voluntary member organisations with expertise and local knowledge of Dorset's coast and inshore waters. The Dorset Coast Forum was the catalyst, source and main consultative body for the Dorset & East Devon Coast bid for World Heritage Site Status. The 'Jurassic Coast' was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 2001.
- 2.37 Strategic coastal partnerships facilitate collaborative working. The Dorset Coast Forum utilises its membership to address issues such as climate change, sea level rise, marine conservation zones and coastal defence decision making in Dorset.
- 2.38 The Forum prepared the Dorset Coast Strategy in 1999, which is currently being revised. The Strategy sets out a long term future for the coast, covering the coastline and inshore waters from Lyme Regis to Christchurch. Its main aim is to protect Dorset's coastal and maritime resources whilst encouraging the development of a vibrant coastal economy and offering support to coastal communities.
- 2.39 There are four key elements to the Dorset Coast Strategy:
- **Vision:** A clear vision of the future of the Dorset Coast
  - **Principles:** A basis for widespread agreement on future planning and management

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<sup>7</sup> Translating Shoreline Management Plans into Spatial Plans. Volume 1 and 2. Final Report for the Environment Agency by The Planning Cooperative, March 2009.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/dcf>

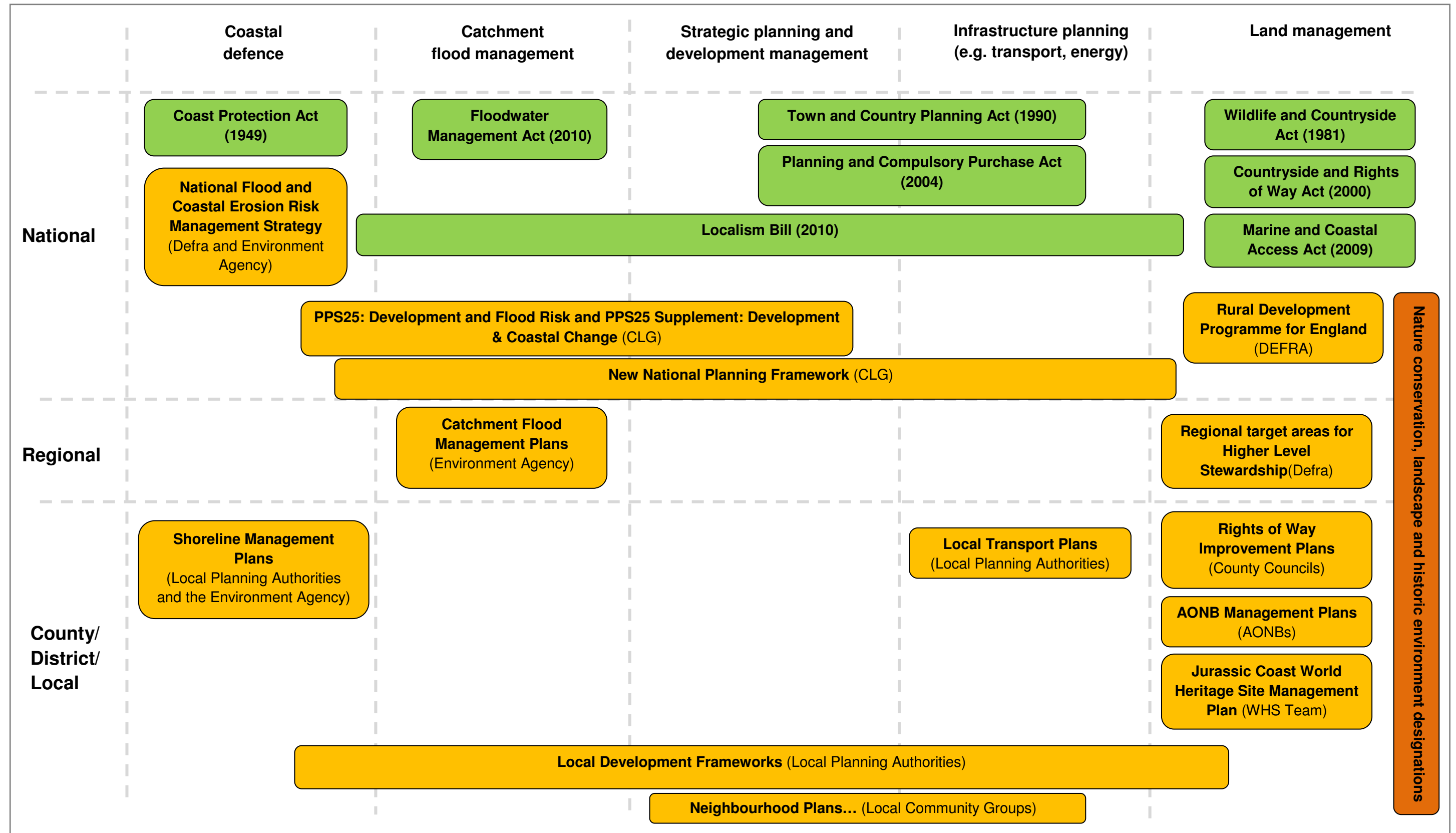


- **Priorities:** Nine priorities for the future management of Dorset's coast
  - **Action:** Detailed policies and actions to achieve progress with each priority.
- 2.40 There are eight principles, of equal importance, which aim to put the overall concept of sustainability into practical effect on the Dorset Coast:
- Principle 1: The need for long-term conservation of the coast
  - Principle 2: The need for equivalent recognition for sea and land, within realistic limits
  - Principle 3: The need to support sustainable use of coastal resources
  - Principle 4: The need to maximise prosperity and quality of life
  - Principle 5: The need to particularly encourage coastal development which works with the environment
  - Principle 6: The need for effective local involvement in coastal decisions
  - Principle 7: The need to work towards an integrated approach to transport, ensuring coastal issues are firmly on the agenda
  - Principle 8: The need to work together

## **OTHER RELEVANT LEGISLATION CONSIDERED WITHIN THE SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEM**

- 2.41 In addition to the national planning policy specifically relating to coastal management issues, there are a number of other land use designations and controls that must be taken into account by local authorities when developing planning policy in coastal areas. Most of the land in the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is protected by wide ranging international and national conservation legislation. The Site includes 14 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated for both geological and biological interests. These include vegetated sea cliffs (a rare habitat also designated in some places as a Special Area of Conservation) and the Fleet Lagoon and Exe Estuary European wetland sites (protected under the international Ramsar designation). In addition, most of the Site also lies within either the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or the Dorset AONB; designations which reflect these nationally important landscapes and protect the setting for the Site. The Isle of Portland is the only part of the World Heritage Site which is not within an AONB.

**Dorset Coast Pathfinder Spatial Planning Research Project: Schematic 'map' of spatial plans and strategies providing the policy framework relating to coastal management**



**Key:**

- Policy Statements, Plans and Strategies
- Legislation, Directives, Bills, Acts of Parliament and Regulations
- Designations

(Government departments, agencies and local authorities with responsibility for implementing legislation, preparing policy, strategies and plans are shown in brackets)

### 3 Identification of National Best Practice Examples

#### INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 This part of the study involved identifying and reviewing national examples of best practice where sustainable management for coastal change is considered to be embedded within local-level planning policy. In reviewing examples of best practice, approaches that could be applied elsewhere, including the Jurassic Coast, are identified, as are any useful 'model policies'.
- 3.2 There are many coastal planning authorities in the UK that could be considered for investigation. As a result, the starting point for the review was to a focus on the authorities that had been recommended during the project inception meeting: Coastal Lincolnshire, East Riding, North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth. Coastal Lincolnshire was selected on the basis of the experience of the Steering Group and East Riding, North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth were selected on the basis that they are Pathfinder authorities which have investigated the use of spatial planning to facilitate coastal change adaptation.
- 3.3 However, having started the review it became apparent that Coastal Lincolnshire did not represent the best example of good practice due to the relatively limited extent to which coastal change issues have so far been embedded in local policy. Waveney District was instead selected as the fourth authority to be investigated as the approach taken there represents a more comprehensive example of good practice.
- 3.4 For each of these authorities, the policies contained in their Core Strategies, Supplementary Planning Documents and other LDF documents were reviewed. In addition, wider ranging documents were reviewed including guidance documents and research reports/publications where these were considered to have made a relevant contribution to local planning policy.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

##### Coverage of coastal change within policy documents

- 3.5 **Tables 1 to 4 in Appendix 2** outline the key elements of local planning policy (or supporting research) that address sustainable coastal management in each of the four authorities. All of these planning authorities have addressed the issue of coastal change within their adopted or emerging Core Strategies; however the extent to which additional specific guidance documents have been produced varies. In North Norfolk, as well as including a number of relevant policies in the adopted Core Strategy, additional non-statutory guidance has been produced to provide more information about the implementation of these Core Strategy policies, entitled '*Development Control Guidance: Development and Coastal Erosion*'. Similarly in East Riding and Waveney, forthcoming SPDs will provide further guidance on the application of policies relating to coastal change.

- 3.6 Such additional guidance is considered to be very useful in providing further detail about the application of Core Strategy policies. However, in the case of the North Norfolk guidance, it is not clear why this has not been produced as an SPD (in line with the approach taken in East Riding and Waveney) which would carry more weight in planning decisions.
- 3.7 In Great Yarmouth, the Core Strategy is not supported by further guidance documents.

### **Reference to Shoreline Management Plans**

- 3.8 The approach of all four authorities in terms of the extent to which they make linkages with the relevant Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) is similar. All make reference to the SMPs and highlight their importance as part of the evidence base, and the relevant policies generally refer to the need to take the SMP(s) into consideration. For example, in Waveney's Core Strategy, the supporting text to the coastal erosion policy includes a summary of the SMP policies for the relevant parts of the coastline, which provides useful background to the policy. Policy CS03: Flooding and Coastal Erosion then goes on to state that '*proposals should...avoid areas at risk from coastal erosion and ensure they are compatible with the appropriate Shoreline Management Plan*'.
- 3.9 The other three authorities all take a similar approach, referring to the relevant SMPs that have been produced and reflecting but not repeating their policies. The North Norfolk Core Strategy states that decisions about investment in coastal defence are made in light of SMP findings. Similarly, in East Riding the Core Strategy states that coastal erosion policy is linked to the SMP.
- 3.10 Great Yarmouth's LDF states within Core Policy CS13 that '*flood risk will be minimised by consideration of the Shoreline Management Plan*'. However, the SMP is not directly referred to in relation to coastal erosion policy.

### **New development in coastal areas**

- 3.11 Three of these four authorities have identified Coastal Change Management Areas (although in North Norfolk this has been referred to as the Coastal Erosion Constraint Area). This is in line with policy DCC3 of the PPS25 Supplement, which requires authorities to identify such areas and set out the type of development that will be appropriate within them.
- 3.12 The way in which the CCMA's have been defined varies between the authorities. In North Norfolk, the Proposals Map shows the CCMA as extending from the mean low water mark up to the indicative area at risk of erosion up to 2105. Similarly in Waveney, it is determined as the area forecast to be at risk from coastal erosion over the long-term (up to 2105), as defined by the Shoreline Management Plan erosion risk lines.
- 3.13 In East Riding, it is stated in the latest version of the Core Strategy (the Preferred Approach document) that the CCMA will be defined based on the erosion risk set out in the SMP2 for the different epochs (short, mid and long term). However, the proposals map showing the CCMA is not yet available so it is not clear which epoch(s) will to be used.

- 3.14 Within the identified CCMA's, development is restricted in principle by all of the four authorities, and although the precise wording of the relevant policies varies, the overall approach taken is broadly similar.
- 3.15 In North Norfolk, policy EN11: Coastal Erosion prohibits any development from occurring within the Coastal Erosion Constraint Area unless it can be demonstrated that it will result in no increased risk to life or significant increase in risk to property. Similarly, in East Riding, the proposed policy HQE6: Managing Environmental Hazards allows for certain temporary developments, for example where they would benefit the local tourism economy, whilst prohibiting residential development. This type of approach allows for some flexibility, allowing development where it may benefit the local area without increasing the risk to life or livelihood.

### **Rollback of development**

- 3.16 North Norfolk, East Riding and Waveney Councils have all adopted policies specifically facilitating the rollback of development. However, there are generally specific criteria included in these policies which must be met in order for rollback to be permitted. These criteria relate to issues such as the timescale within which a development must be at risk, the nature and location of the new development and the way in which the original site will be used once the development has been relocated.
- 3.17 In terms of the timescale within which the development to be replaced must be at risk, in some cases there is variation between different types of development. For example in North Norfolk, commercial development or community facilities must be at risk within 50 years and residential properties within 20 years. However, in Waveney, community facilities, commercial properties and residential properties are all required to be at risk within 20 years in order for rollback to be permitted.
- 3.18 Although there is some variation between the authorities, in most cases the rollback of residential properties is permitted only where they are at risk within 20 years, with this time period being longer for other types of development. We consider this differentiation to be appropriate for distinguishing between the varying lifespans of residential properties and commercial developments/community facilities.
- 3.19 None of the four authorities reviewed have identified specific areas in which rollback should occur. Instead, they have tended to adopt a policy that permits rollback in principle, subject to the new development meeting particular requirements such as it being located a suitable distance from the area of coastline most at risk. This distance is not generally specified, with North Norfolk stating that new development must be '*beyond the Coastal Erosion Constraint Area*' and East Riding stating that it must be in '*a suitable coastal location outside of [the CCMA]*'. However, the research reports that were produced for East Riding Council in 2003<sup>9</sup> and 2005<sup>10</sup> (relating to the

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<sup>9</sup> The Rollback of Caravan and Holiday Home Parks from the eroding East Yorkshire Coastline: Final Report (August 2003)

<sup>10</sup> The Rollback of Residential and Agricultural Dwellings at Risk from Coastal Erosion in the East riding of Yorkshire (December 2005)

rollback of caravan and holiday parks and residential properties respectively) recommended that new policy should require developments to be relocated so as to be 'no longer at risk within 100 years'. This approach could be useful as it provides a more solid basis for determining the location of rolled back development; however it has not yet been reflected in emerging policy within East Riding.

- 3.20 The Pathfinder report<sup>11</sup> produced for Great Yarmouth Borough Council highlighted the usefulness of illustrating potential areas for rollback on a map which also shows the CCMA, in order that constraints and opportunities can be viewed alongside one another. This approach may prove useful in communicating positive opportunities to communities affected by coastal change.
- 3.21 A key element of rollback that appears to be less well addressed within planning policy is the use of the original site after the development has been relocated. We consider that Policy EN12 in the North Norfolk Core Strategy addresses this issue well, as it states that proposals for rollback will be permitted where '*...the site of the dwelling it replaces is either cleared, and the site rendered safe and managed for the benefit of the local environment, or put to a temporary use that is beneficial to the well-being of the local community, as appropriate.*'

### **Implementation**

- 3.22 All of the four authorities make some reference to how planning policies associated with coastal erosion will be implemented; however this tends to take the form of listing out the relevant strategies and plans and the responsible authorities within an implementation strategy, rather than providing more specific practical details. For example, in North Norfolk's Core Strategy, the Implementation section states that the coastal erosion policy will be implemented through coastal management plans, the Shoreline Management Plan and development control decisions, and that the responsible authorities will be North Norfolk District Council, the Environment Agency and Defra. The policy referring to the replacement of development affected by erosion is to be delivered through the implementation of land in the Site Specific Proposals and through development control decisions, with the relevant parties being the District Council and private developers. However, no detailed information is given about the practical delivery of the policy, for example in relation to funding.
- 3.23 Similarly to North Norfolk, the delivery framework for the Waveney Core Strategy states that Policy CS03 will be implemented through Shoreline Management Plans, Site Specific Allocations Document, Development Management Policies Document and the Development Control System, but does not go into a great level of detail about the practical elements of delivery.
- 3.24 East Riding's Core Strategy does not include such a detailed implementation framework as that set out for North Norfolk and Waveney, but the

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<sup>11</sup> Scratby and California Coastal Pathfinder Planning Project: Recommendations and Final Report (January 2011)

Implementation section of the Plan simply states that a range of partners will play a role in the implementation of the strategy. In addition, the supporting text to the coastal erosion policies states that further guidance on the application of re-location or rollback is to be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document, although this is not yet available.

***North Norfolk experience of adopted rollback policy***

- 3.25 In order to establish more information about how the policies in Norfolk are being implemented since the Core Strategy was adopted in 2008, discussion took place with a coastal planning officer from the Council. It was established that, so far, no individual applications for permission to rollback residential properties at risk of coastal erosion have come forward. However, using Pathfinder funding, the Council itself is trialling the application of the rollback policy and has bought nine at risk properties from homeowners in Happisburgh. The Council is pursuing planning applications to 'rollback' or redevelop those houses in other locations. Taking into account the potential to secure planning permission for redevelopment of the houses on land elsewhere in the district, the Council was able to offer the homeowners an enhanced value for their at risk homes. Clearly, in order for rollback to take place, there is a need to have a second piece of land available, upon which a new property will be permitted. It is considered very likely that this is the reason individual applications to rollback at risk properties have not been received to date.
- 3.26 Despite the lack of applications from individual homeowners, the officer felt that the adoption of the rollback policy should have a significant benefit by increasing the value of properties threatened by erosion (above their current very low value due to the risk of erosion), if homeowners or larger developers can secure land with planning permission upon which to redevelop properties.
- 3.27 In the case of the nine properties that have been purchased by the Council, the expectation is that a planning condition will require the at risk sites to be restored to an appropriate use, in line with the requirements of the Core Strategy policy. It is anticipated that this will comprise some form of public open space. Going forward beyond the era of Pathfinder funding, the Council is currently uncertain about how the rollback policy will be used; however it is considered reasonably likely that private developers may come forward to undertake rollback, using a model based on the Council's current trial at Happisburgh.
- 3.28 The approach being taken to businesses affected by coastal erosion has been different, in that the Council is working with local businesses, providing support to enable them to develop business plans for relocating. A further programme of grants and loans is currently being developed, in order to assist businesses in implementing those plans. However, this is again based on Pathfinder funding, and it is not clear whether these initiatives will be able to be continued once the Pathfinder funding is no longer available.

## **Monitoring effects of policies**

- 3.29 In terms of monitoring the effects of policies relating to coastal change, the four authorities have generally included appropriate indicators within their monitoring frameworks, for example in North Norfolk relevant indicators include the number of dwellings permitted in the 100 year coastal erosion zone (target: 0) and the number of permissions for relocation of property that is at risk from coastal erosion (no fixed target). The East Riding Core Strategy sets out similar indicators, including the proportion of properties/caravan pitches within the CCMA that relocate ('rollback') further inland over the plan period, the number of previously developed sites restored within CCMA(s) through re-location/rollback developments or upon expiry of temporary permissions and the number of planning permissions granted in CCMA(s) (by type). Of the four authorities Great Yarmouth goes the least far in this sense, with the monitoring indicators set out in its Core Strategy focusing more on the risk from flooding and not referring directly to the issue of rollback or the location of development.

## **SUMMARY**

- 3.30 Although the approach taken varies between the four authorities reviewed, all can be seen to have embedded coastal change issues into local level planning policy, and provide good examples of policy approaches that may be replicated elsewhere. In broad terms, the approach taken by these authorities involves:

- Identification of CCMA(s) and the types of development that will be permitted/restricted within them.
- Development of a specific policy facilitating rollback and specifying criteria for such proposals, including how 'at risk' different types of developments need to be and any environmental restrictions.
- Development of criteria for where development can be rolled back to, for example specifying the required distance from the CCMA or the time period within which the new development must be 'safe' from erosion.
- Criteria for how the original site should be used after development has been rolled back.
- Production of additional guidance to accompany Core Strategy policies e.g. a specific coastal change management SPD.



## **4 Identification of Coastal Change Risks Affecting the Six Communities**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 4.1 Prior to reviewing the planning policy context at each of the six communities, it was necessary to understand the particular coastal change risks facing each community. As such, the Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) for each stretch of the coastline were reviewed in order to identify the coastal change risks which are considered to be of particular importance in relation to each of the six communities. As well as considering the nature of the coastal processes that are occurring, the extent and type of assets which may be at risk from erosion have also been identified.
- 4.2 The two relevant SMPs are the South Devon and Dorset SMP (consultation draft, 2009) which covers the coastline at Sidmouth, Charmouth, Seatown, Preston Beach Road and Ringstead, and the Poole and Christchurch Bay SMP (2011) which covers the coastline at North Swanage.
- 4.3 Information that had already been compiled and published on the Jurassic Coast Pathfinder website was also drawn upon, as were discussions that took place with the Dorset County Council earth science manager and a coastal engineer from the Environment Agency at a meeting held in April 2011.
- 4.4 The aim of this review was to focus the study and to ensure that appropriate recommendations can be made to address the most pressing and locally relevant coastal change issues. The matrix overleaf sets out a description of each of the communities and the existing coastal defences in place, the planned change in policy (as per the relevant SMP) and any key issues that need to be considered.

Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
<p><b>Sidmouth</b></p>	<p>Regionally and historically important seaside town - once an important fishing port.</p> <p>Popular tourist destination - world renowned Folk Festival since 1955.</p> <p>Characterised by the seafront promenade which is lined with Victorian and Georgian buildings.</p> <p>River Sid meets the sea at the eastern end of town, with Alma Bridge providing the main access from the town to Pennington Point.</p> <p>Population – 14,400 of which 35% are above retirement age.</p>	<p>Currently defended by a range of measures including rock groynes, offshore rock breakwaters and seawalls. There are also ongoing beach management activities. The seawall protects low-lying land behind it from flooding, while the shoreline structures and offshore breakwaters help to retain beach material.</p> <p>There are currently no coastal defences protecting Pennington Point.</p> <p>Defences along the River Sid also protect the town from flooding; however these are not designed to withstand attack from the sea.</p>	<p>The long term policy (for the next 100 years) is to ‘hold the line’ for the main part of the town along the fronting esplanade and beach. This means that the existing coastal defences will be maintained and the risk of coastal flooding is controlled for at least 100 years.</p> <p>The mouth of the River Sid will be subject to ‘managed realignment’. There are currently minimal defences here but coastal flooding and sea level rise will impact on the footbridge and river mouth area.</p> <p>The policy at Pennington Point and the eastern end of Sidmouth (extending eastwards from the town and incorporating the gardens of the clifftop houses) is currently ‘hold the line’, however the draft SMP2 policy states a move towards ‘managed</p>	<p>There are currently plans to explore possible locations for further visitor parking and visitor facilities within the town. As a result, maintenance of coastal defences along the sea front is seen as vital to the economy, which relies heavily on tourism.</p> <p>Issues relating to coastal access have been shown to be of particular concern to the community, in addition to the potential for loss or damage to property.</p> <p>Sidmouth to Beer Coast SSSI and Sidmouth to West Bay SAC are located to the east of the town, extending eastwards along the coastline, and so may have implications in terms of relocating development. Similarly, the East Devon AONB surrounds the town to the east and west as well as behind it inland, so may have particularly significant implications for rollback.</p>

Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
			realignment' and eventually 'no active intervention'.	
<b>Charmouth</b>	<p>The seafront at Charmouth consists of a wide sandy beach which is split through the middle by the River Char.</p> <p>It is largely situated on high ground at the eastern end of the Black Ven landslide complex.</p> <p>The eastern end of the beach is accessible via a footbridge over the river, from the car park off Lower Sea Lane.</p> <p>The area focused on for this study consists of the parish-owned foreshore car park and a former cement factory which houses a café, fossil shop, a retail outlet and the Heritage Coast Centre.</p> <p>The Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre is a key</p>	<p>The Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre, toilet block and car park are currently defended by a stepped sea wall, a rock groyne and rock armour sited to the west of the River Char.</p>	<p>The short term policy for the sea front is to 'hold the line', meaning that the sea wall and rock armour will be maintained for the next 25 years.</p> <p>This policy reflects the 50-70 year design life of the defence scheme, which was constructed in the late 1980s.</p> <p>The medium and long term policy (between 2030 - 2110) will move towards 'no active intervention' along the sea front and cliffs to the west of Charmouth, and 'managed realignment' along the mouth of the river. This will mean no further maintenance of the current sea wall and rock groynes or construction of new coastal defence schemes.</p>	<p>Due to its exposed position, the Heritage Coast Centre and part of the Parish owned car park are vulnerable to wave attack. The change in the draft SMP2 policy will result in their eventual closure and loss, which could have significant implications for Charmouth's economy. As with many other areas along the Jurassic Coast, changes to the area will occur through a catastrophic storm event rather than gradual erosional processes.</p> <p>Beyond this area, the footbridge over the River Char will remain vulnerable to a catastrophic storm event despite being recently replaced. The South West Coast Path either side of Charmouth will be subject to further disruption in the future caused by landslides.</p> <p>The cliff top properties to the</p>

Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
	<p>visitor facility for the World Heritage Site and receives approximately 87,000 visitors a year. The café and businesses on the ground floor also provide a service to both locals and tourists. The Heritage Coast Centre provides one of the best opportunities within the 95 miles of the Jurassic Coast to see fossils found in the surrounding areas. It also plays a key role in ensuring public safety, giving advice on how to enjoy the area and collect fossils safely.</p> <p>There is a generally good level of understanding from residents about the issues facing the community and the need to take action.</p>			<p>west of the Heritage Coast Centre will also become increasingly exposed to the risk of erosion, including episodic landslides.</p> <p>The West Dorset SSSI runs along this part of the coastline, as does the Sidmouth to West Bay SAC, and so these designations may have implications for the rollback of development.</p>
<b>Seatown</b>	<p>A small settlement, located just under a mile south of Chideock.</p>	<p>A land stabilisation project was installed at Seatown in 1997 in the form of rock armour to protect the</p>	<p>The short term policy is to continue to 'hold the line' by maintaining the existing rock armour on the western side of</p>	<p>There is an issue relating to car traffic in the area, with concern about the large amount of through-traffic using the A35 as</p>

Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
	<p>There is a pub (The Anchor Inn), a small footbridge over the river running through the middle of the beach, a caravan park (Golden Cap Holiday Park) and car park.</p> <p>The beach is shingle and lies just east of Golden Cap (the highest point on England's south coast).</p>	<p>Anchor Inn and private property from land instability caused by poor drainage and direct wave attack. However, despite the defences in place, erosion still occurs, albeit at a lower rate than along undefended parts of the cliff.</p>	<p>Seatown to the end of its design life. The policy after this is 'no active intervention' for the medium and long term (between 2030 - 2110).</p> <p>This approach could have knock-on effects for the public house, public toilets, car park, turning circle, private property and slipway. However as with many other areas along the Jurassic Coast, changes to the area are predicted to occur through a catastrophic storm event rather than gradual erosion processes.</p>	<p>the main connection between eastern and western areas (e.g. Bridport and Lyme Regis).</p> <p>Sea Hill Lane and Mill Lane are the only access roads leading down to Seatown from the A35 in Chideock. There is often conflict between drivers and other road users in these narrow lanes, with high levels of background traffic and illegal parking causing congestion and air quality problems.</p> <p>There is some tension between commercial interests who rely on visitors continuing to visit Seatown and residents who experience some negative impacts from high visitor numbers.</p> <p>Rollback may prove a very complicated process, given the complex pattern of land ownership in Seatown.</p> <p>Seatown falls within the Dorset AONB and the West Dorset SSSI</p>

Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
				<p>and Sidmouth to West Bay SAC run along this part of the coastline. These designations could therefore impose constraints on potential rollback options.</p> <p>Erosion in this area would necessitate the realignment of the South West Coast Path.</p>
<p><b>Preston Beach Road, Weymouth</b></p>	<p>Preston Beach Road is a major access route between Weymouth and east Dorset (the Purbeck coast, Poole and Bournemouth) and an important link between Preston, Bowleaze Cove, Overcombe and Weymouth.</p> <p>Overcombe and Bowleaze Cove is an area with substantial homes and flats as well as commercial businesses (shops, beach restaurant and public house), car parking and public toilets.</p>	<p>Preston Beach Road is currently defended by a sea wall, a rock groyne at the southern end of the road and ongoing beach nourishment schemes.</p> <p>The beach is now raised at the back, giving some protection to the road.</p> <p>There is also a groyne protecting the Holiday Park and Riviera Hotel at Bowleaze Coveaway.</p>	<p>The short and medium term policy (up to 2060) is to continue to 'hold the line' along the Preston Beach Road.</p> <p>However, the long term policy will move towards 'managed realignment'. This means maintenance of the current sea wall and beach nourishment schemes will continue until 2060, after which it will be too technically challenging, expensive and unsustainable to carry this level of coastal defence forward.</p> <p>This will have implications for the maintenance of the road</p>	<p>At some point in the future, there is the possibility that Preston Beach Road could be subject to closure. This would sever an important eastern access route into and out of Weymouth, and expose several hundred houses in Lodmoor to increased risk of tidal flooding. It would also have major implications for traffic management through Preston, Lodmoor and other routes in and out of Weymouth. Following the recent opening of the Weymouth Relief Road, however, the local road hierarchy is being revised which will result in Preston Beach Road being reclassified from an</p>

Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
			<p>during large storms e.g. breaching of the sea wall, overtopping of seawater onto the road, frequent damage to the road and possible road closures.</p> <p>This will have a knock-on effect to Overcombe, Lodmoor, Preston and Bowleaze Cove in terms of access to Weymouth, as well as implications for businesses which depend on this road for access.</p>	<p>'A' to a 'B' road, as the new inland route into Weymouth from the east will become the 'A' road.</p> <p>In addition to these traffic issues, there would be an impact on the existing marshland habitats, potential risks to properties and a landfill site.</p> <p>Lodmoor SSSI lies directly behind Preston Beach Road, which may constrain opportunities for rollback.</p>
<b>Ringstead</b>	<p>Ringstead is a small village with 25 private properties and a large caravan site.</p> <p>The village is characterised by a high proportion of second/holiday homes.</p> <p>Local opinion is generally in favour of ongoing protection.</p> <p>Land is split between private ownership and the</p>	<p>A coastal defence scheme, in the form of rock armour groyne and beach recharge, was constructed in the early 1990's to protect 25 private properties and the caravan site.</p>	<p>The short term draft SMP2 policy is to continue to 'hold the Line' of the existing rock groyne and beach nourishment scheme. However, this will move towards 'no active intervention' in the medium to long term. This could cause a subsequent loss of property and parts of the caravan site.</p> <p>There will also be potential impact on part of the medieval</p>	<p>There is concern about the potential loss of property and caravans to their owners, as well as the impact on conservation and tourism.</p> <p>However, the 1990s defence scheme obscured a boundary between two rock types that has the potential to be of international significance (additional to that of World Heritage Site status) so the earth</p>

Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
	National Trust.		<p>settlement which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.</p> <p>The sections of the coastline surrounding Ringstead are already subject to a 'no active intervention' policy, which could also impact on the natural coastal processes in the area.</p>	<p>sciences interest would benefit in the longer term from removal.</p> <p>The South Dorset Coast SSSI runs along this part of the coastline, as does the Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC. These designations could therefore impose constraints on potential rollback options.</p>
<b>North Swanage</b>	<p>North Swanage is the area north of the seafront esplanade in Swanage.</p> <p>Consists of a dense mixture of private property and large hotels, some of which are close to the cliff top.</p> <p>The cliffs are lower level and of softer composition than to the north (beyond Ballard Point).</p>	<p>There is a low sea wall protecting the bottom of the cliffs along the esplanade and timber groynes lining the beach, as well as ongoing beach nourishment schemes. There are also some privately installed cliff stabilisation schemes in place.</p>	<p>The draft short and medium term policy for North Swanage is 'hold the line', but moving to 'managed realignment' in the longer term.</p> <p>This means the sea wall, groynes and beach nourishment schemes will continue to be maintained until 2060, after which it will become an increasing challenge to protect.</p>	<p>Despite the sea wall, beach nourishment and private cliff stabilisation schemes, small landslides continue to threaten some properties along the cliff-top.</p> <p>Recharge of the beach with fine material may become a less viable option in the future, and it may be necessary to recharge with coarser material in order to maintain the level of protection.</p> <p>In the medium to long term, erosion of the cliff top will mean property loss along the cliff top and impacts on the coast footpath</p>



Community	Description	Existing defences in place	Planned SMP policy	Key issues for consideration
				<p>between Sheps Hollow and Ballard Down.</p> <p>The cliffs are a SSSI (Studland Cliffs and Purbeck Ridge), designated for their geological interest (Purbeck Ridge). The Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC is also located adjacent to this stretch of coastline. These designations could therefore impose constraints on potential rollback options.</p>

## 5 Review of Spatial Policies Affecting the Six Communities

- 5.1 This stage of the project involved reviewing the existing planning context at each of the six communities, and identifying the particular plans and policies affecting coastal change management.
- 5.2 The six communities are spread between four local authorities: East Devon (Sidmouth), West Dorset (Seatown, Charmouth and Ringstead), Purbeck (North Swanage) and Weymouth and Portland (Preston Beach Road, Weymouth).
- 5.3 As well as reviewing the saved policies from each authority's Local Plan, the authorities' emerging Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) were also reviewed in order to establish the direction of current policy-making. The LDFs being produced by each of the four authorities are at varying stages in their development. In Weymouth and Portland and in Purbeck, the Core Strategies are nearing submission; while East Devon's Core Strategy is at the Preferred Options stage and in West Devon the Core Strategy is currently on hold, having progressed as far as the Issues and Options stage in 2007 before the District was appointed as a vanguard authority for Neighbourhood Planning.
- 5.4 The South West Regional Spatial Strategy<sup>12</sup> has also been reviewed because, although the Government has set out its intention to abolish the RSSs, until this process has been legally completed they remain a material consideration in local policy-making.
- 5.5 As well as considering those policies that directly seek to address coastal change issues, other types of planning policies will be relevant, such as those directing new development where it may have a bearing on land availability for the rollback of development.
- 5.6 The matrix in **Appendix 3** sets out the plans and policies relating to coastal change management that affect each of the six communities. This policy context has then been considered alongside the main coastal change risks affecting each community (as established in Chapter 4), in order to identify where there are particular gaps or where policy could better address the key issues facing each stretch of coastline. The findings of this review are described below. No criticism is implied by this commentary; it seeks simply to set out as a statement of fact whether and how each district is addressing the key coastal change issues in current planning policy.

### *East Devon*

- 5.7 East Devon's Core Strategy reached the Preferred Options stage in 2010. A large number of representations were received in response to that consultation, and work is now progressing to prepare a further document for consultation in October 2011. The Preferred Options version of the Core

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<sup>12</sup> The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes – For Public Consultation (July 2008).

Strategy (2010) includes only one policy directly relating to coastal change management, stating that *'the Council will define areas where coastal defence measures are necessary, and where managed changes are proposed, and means for securing their implementation'*. However, it is not clear where or when the Council will determine this and there is no indication that a specific SPD or guidance document will be produced relating to coastal management.

- 5.8 The saved policies from the adopted East Devon Local Plan do not refer directly to coastal change issues; however there are some Local Plan policies and Core Strategy preferred options which may indirectly affect coastal change management at Sidmouth, as outlined below.

### **Sidmouth**

- 5.9 The East Devon Core Strategy preferred option for Sidmouth did not refer to coastal defence or erosion issues, but focused on the location and nature of development planned for the town. No strategic areas for development were identified in or around Sidmouth; rather development would be infilled within the existing urban area, with provision being made for further development of 250 houses and employment land through a forthcoming 'allocation' Development Plan Document.
- 5.10 In terms of the potential for the rollback of development to occur at Sidmouth, the constraints are therefore more likely to relate to environmental designations around the town. The East Devon AONB surrounds Sidmouth on both the eastern and western sides and stretches back inland. The saved Local Plan policy EN1: Developments Affecting AONBs which will still apply, states that landscape conservation and enhancement will take priority over other considerations, and there is no Local Plan policy or Core Strategy preferred option which reduces such constraints on development where it is to facilitate rollback.

### **West Dorset**

- 5.11 The West Dorset Core Strategy reached the Issues and Options stage in 2007. However, the District has been selected as a vanguard authority for neighbourhood planning and the current intention is to develop a new-style local plan, probably in partnership with Weymouth and Portland as the two authorities are in the process of merging their officer structures. As such, the adopted Local Plan remains the key consideration at this stage. The early Issues and Options version of the Core Strategy did not include any draft policies or make any site-specific allocations for development.

### **Charmouth**

- 5.12 Saved policy AH5: Slope Instability (Landslide) Policy for the Lyme Regis and Charmouth Area from the adopted Local Plan restricts new development in the specified area at risk from landslides; however it does not address the risk posed to existing developments.

### **Seatown**

- 5.13 There are no saved policies in the Local Plan which directly affect coastal management at Seatown.

























































































































