

### Shoreline Management Plan (Bridgwater Bay to Bideford Bay) Extracts from "Consultation Summary" leaflet, 1998

#### Shoreline Management Plans

Today it is appreciated that processes operating on the coastline largely occur within distinct lengths of coast (sediment cells). The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), who are responsible for overseeing and partially funding coast protection and flood defence for the Government, has produced guidelines for the development of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) within these sediment cells. SMPs promote co-operation between Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and other organisations involved with the defence of the coast from erosion or flooding.

SMPs are documents that lay the strategy for sustainable coastal defence. These Plans provide details on a wide range of issues including coastal processes, natural environment, planning issues, coastal defence needs and current and future land-use. SMPs assist those responsible for coastal defence to formulate planning strategies and control future development of the shoreline. Flood and coastal defence authorities will consult the SMP in developing coastal defence strategies. DEFRA has identified the following key steps in the development of a SMP:

**Stage 1-** to identify all those with an interest in the area, collate and analyse data on all key issues, set management objectives for the Plan area.

**Stage 2-** to define management units; appraise strategic coastal defence options, consult on the preferred strategic defence options; compile the Plan

#### Management Units and Implementation Lengths

The coastline of the Bridgwater Bay to Bideford Bay SMP is divided into twenty Management Units. These are further sub-divided into Implementation Lengths which are defined as 'a length of shoreline requiring a specific coastal defence option for the future to meet the overall strategic requirements of the Management Unit'.

#### The Coastal Defence Options

Coastal defence methods range from hard, structure types like large rocks and seawalls to soft schemes like beach nourishment. A strategic option for each Implementation Length is determined after considering its probable effect on the adjacent shoreline and based on the objectives of the Plan. The defence strategy for each Management Unit consists of the strategies for its component lengths. These are determined from four general options:

##### *Do nothing*

carry out no coastal defence works except for safety measures.

##### *Hold the line*

maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by the existing defences, or build new defences along the existing frontage.

##### *Advance the line*

build new defences seawards of the existing position.

##### *Managed retreat*

adopt a more landward defence position.

Strategy selection requires sound understanding of current coastal processes to ensure its appropriateness. However, in some areas processes are not fully understood, so strategy adoption requires further knowledge. Thus a fifth option has been developed:

##### *Observe and Monitor*

undertake a period of more detailed examination of the shoreline to provide a sound baseline for selection of the preferred defence option in the future.

In conjunction with this the SMP contains a number of recommendations for future research, studies and monitoring.

The preferred coastal defence strategy for each of the 20 Management Units is presented in this leaflet. (Two of these are relevant to Sedgemoor District, as set out below).

#### Hinkley Point to River Brue (PARR)

This south side of Bridgwater Bay, from Hinkley Point, includes the banks of the River Parrett as far upstream as Comwich. Except for areas at

## Appendix 8.3

### Sedgemoor District Local Plan

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Hinkley Point, Stolford and Combwich, the whole of this unit lies within the flood plain. Hinkley Point Power Station is a major contributor to the local economy and also provides a tourist attraction. Agriculture continues to dominate the coast east of Hinkley Point, with small settlements at Stolford and Steart. On the west bank of the River Parrett is the small village of Combwich which has harbour facilities. Land on the east bank of the River Parrett and south of Burnham-on-Sea is also agricultural, helping to sustain the areas second largest employer. On the east bank the villages of Pawlett, Stretcholt, Huntspill and Alstone lie within flood plains. The entire intertidal area of this unit is of international nature conservation importance, along with some terrestrial habitats, mainly recognising its importance for migrant bird populations. Most of the frontage is also part of a National Nature Reserve.

Six Implementation Lengths (\*NB two of the six lengths are outside Sedgemoor District) have been defined for this Unit. Hold the line strategies are preferred for the majority of the frontage, primarily to prevent flooding of property, land and habitats. These frontages will primarily be held by maintenance of existing defence structures, although some long term improvement may be necessary to maintain defence standards. Observe and Monitor is proposed for the shoreline between Stolford and Fenning Island, and on the West bank of the River Parrett to Combwich. This will allow for site specific consideration of managed retreat on the undeveloped frontages, to promote saltmarsh growth for nature conservation and defence purposes. Further study of the natural defence system within this unit is advocated to assess evolutionary trends.

#### **Burnham-on-Sea to Brean Down (BURN)**

The intertidal flats fronting the whole of this unit, between the River Brue and Brean Down, are of international nature conservation importance. There is uninterrupted development throughout the whole of the Management Unit, albeit a mixture of residential, commercial, tourism and leisure interests. Burnham-on-Sea is the largest development on this west facing stretch of coastline. To the north and adjacent to Berrow Flats, are the tourist developments at Berrow and Brean. Berrow is fronted by a large area of SSSI designated dunes and a golf course. Limited dunes, of local conservation importance,

continue north in front of Brean. This development consists predominantly tourist developments and is the second largest site in the country for touring caravans. Brean Down to the north is an undeveloped headland of high nature conservation and amenity value. Five Implementation Lengths have been defined for this unit. The frontages of Burnham, the holiday camp to the south and Brean have "hold the line" strategies, which will largely be achieved through maintenance of the existing defences. However, at Burnham a study is required to assess movement of the River Parrett channel and its implications for long term foreshore and defence stability. The currently undefended dune section in the north of Burnham should also be studied, to establish any need for future intervention. At Brean, monitoring is also required to assess the levels of fronting beach and dunes, which are integral to the present defence system and steps taken were they to significantly lower. Observe and monitor is promoted for Berrow Dunes to assess their natural evolution, the long term protection offered to developments at Berrow and their possible role as a source of material for the remainder of the unit. This will involve a comprehensive study extending over the entire Management Unit, building upon previous studies of past evolution to analyse shoreline movements at a much more detailed level. For Brean Down the strategy is, do nothing.