

NATIONAL COASTAL OVERVIEW UPDATE

October 2018

The Future of Shoreline Management Plans

The second generation of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) developed by Coastal Groups between 2006 and 2012 are an important reference point for coastal managers. SMPs identify a sustainable management approach for each stretch of coastline, assigning it a policy across three planning horizons – 20 years, 50 years and 100 years. However, as highlighted to the FCRM Committee in January 2017, it is increasingly recognised that some work is needed to ensure that SMPs remain current, up to date and 'fit for purpose'. As a result we are working with the Coastal Group network to identify which aspects of SMPs require updating, and this light touch refresh commenced in April 2018.

We have secured £1m of FCRM portfolio funding to undertake the light touch refresh of 20 SMPs over the next 3 years. The governance has been established for this work together with dedicated project management support. Aims of the refresh following early consultation as follows

- To ensure England benefits from a world class comprehensive shoreline management planning system that reflects the latest technical evidence and contains sustainable and achievable management approaches
- To maintain the coherence between Government policy, the National FCRM Strategy, England's Shoreline Management Plans and the Environment Agency's FCRM six year Investment Programme
- To improve the accessibility to and understanding of Shoreline Management Plan purpose and contents for FCRM Risk Management Authorities, Local Planning Authorities and the interested public
- To actively involve Coastal Group members, Defra organisations and local planners in shoreline management planning, and re-establish the profile and influence of Shoreline Management Plans on the planning process
- To facilitate SMP delivery where possible through direct funding or other support for work which unlocks barriers to progress

Next stages

Sept 18 - Specification and scope consultation with coastal groups took place

Oct – Dec 18 – Work package to be tendered

Jan – April 19 - National level work to commence

Contact Nick Hardiman for more information and see separate briefing note accompanying this update.

Coastal Asset Datasets

The lack of a nationally consistent coastal asset dataset hinders our ability to manage coastal risk strategically. Current local authority and third party owned asset data is often incomplete, difficult to view at a strategic level, and of uncertain quality. This means we have an incomplete overview of coastal risk and local authorities do not have a good starting point for asset management. There are different approaches to asset inspection and no standard data collection or storage. We are unable to provide an overview of all coastal assets be they for flood or coastal erosion management.

One of the main constraints of recent years has been the inability of local authorities to access and store data on our asset management systems (e.g. NFCDD, AIMS) so presenting a complete picture of coastal assets is currently very limited.

We continue to support local authorities through options to include coastal asset monitoring into the National Coastal Monitoring Programme (NCMP) which is estimated to cost £3.4m. John Cocker (Teignbridge Council, Chair of the South West Coastal Group) is the lead on behalf of the NCMP and Coastal Group network.

The aspiration is for the data to be collected in a consistent format and be compatible with our asset management data system so that a complete picture of the nation's coastal assets is readily available.

A refresh bid for the next 6 year NCMP to commence April 2021 has been made for £30m. The refresh funding bid forecast allows for the addition of the third party coastal asset database work which as proposed forms an integral ongoing part of the next phase of the NCMP. The value of the current approved 6 year NCMP to March 2021 is £27.5m, although only £23m has been allocated.

The FCERM Business Board have given a steer that additional funding to deliver this work is highly unlikely together with an expectation that if viewed as a priority the NCMP Board will need to reprioritise the existing programme to deliver this work within the current allocation (£23m)

There is likely to be increasing pressure from RFCC Chairs and Coastal Group Chairs to deliver this as part of the NCMP. The latest was presented to the quarterly Coastal Group Chairs telecon on 28th September.

We have recently completed an internal exercise for Defra to ascertain what local authority and third party coastal asset data actually exists. This exercise reinforced our understanding that there is a very inconsistent set of coastal asset data around the country.

Data collected around the country is inconsistent in terms of identifying flood or erosion assets; length and number of assets; condition and standard of protection; natural or hard defence; maintenance and inspection regime. NE and NW area collect and monitor coastal assets as part of the NCMP already, although cannot access EA systems to share data.

Clearly this is not an ideal situation and prevents us from having a full understanding of the risk associated with coastal assets managed by local authorities and third parties.

Contact Andy Shore for more information.

Coastal Adaptation – Defra

In May 2016, Defra began the process of drawing together experience from the Coastal Change Adaptation Pathfinders (2010-11) to inform and set out policy and practice relating to coastal adaptation.

A steering group has been established which includes representatives from local authorities involved in the largest pathfinder projects (Suffolk Coastal, North Norfolk, East Riding of Yorkshire and Scarborough) - where the immediate risk from erosion is considered greatest. In addition, Defra, DCLG, The National Trust (Phil Dyke), Natural England (Andy Millar), the Environment Agency (Nick Hardiman) and Coastal Groups Network (Bryan Curtis) are also providing advice.

In order to understand the adaptation challenge better Defra has commissioned two important studies to inform the consultation:

Evidence review

HR Wallingford has been asked to review the current national evidence of the scale of the adaptation issue, to identify the current gaps in the evidence, what actions are needed and the scale of the financial implications of resolving adaptation issues.

Economic rationale:

Defra has asked its internal economists to undertake an economic review including looking at the financial mechanisms to support/enable delivery.

This work is now complete and we are working with Defra to understand the next stages in time for practical use alongside the SMP Refresh. This is to ensure that any RMAs re-considering existing SMP management policy options can do so with a fuller understanding of the potential for adaptive approaches.

The CCC Adaptation Sub-Committee is also due to publish its research and findings on Coastal Adaptation Research on the 26th October and this is likely to also have an impact on the SMP policies and refresh alongside the wider 6year capital investment programme.

For further information contact Rachael Hill or Andy Shore

MHCLG Fair funding Review

MHCLG is undertaking a Fair Funding review to consider how to simplify the approach to assessing local authority needs when allocating central funds. Defra led analysis of current flood and coastal funding with a view to simplifying the funding formulae behind the funding allocations. In June Defra recommended that the current formula is used going forward as there wasn't strong enough evidence from other metrics to change the current formula. The current formula is based on past expenditure, and provides a strong correlation between allocation and spend on both flood and coast. In August, MHCLG confirmed that they did not want formulae based on past expenditure. During August/September Defra reinvigorated work, using Environment Agency data, seeking to create a new formula not using past expenditure. The headlines from this work are summarised below -

- The regression analysis Defra undertook, based on the coastal asset data we provided, showed there is no relationship between coastal asset lengths and spend.
- There is a very small relationship between the length of coast and properties at risk.
- While this enabled Defra to give some indication to MHCLG, it does not provide them with the opportunity to create a new formula for allocating funds in line with current spend.
- Therefore it is likely that MHCLG may take the coastal element out of the named funding allocations for local authorities. MHCLG reported to Defra that local authorities welcome this approach.
- Future flood allocations are likely to be based on properties at risk and length of ordinary watercourse.
- Defra will seek steer from Thérèse Coffey on MHCLG's proposed approach to flood and coast funding.
- There are limited opportunities to influence this position on coastal funding, with no immediate longer term opportunities to review the position either (once data collection is improved).
- Next steps on the fair funding review
 - MHCLG will write round Ministers in the coming months.
 - MHCLG's next consultation planned for November/Christmas and expected to finish in January-March 2019. (Though this timeline may be pushed back due to EU-Exit work.)
- The conclusions from the regression analysis are providing an impetus for Defra to seek to improve coastal data collection and are feeding this issue into the conversations around research budgets and programmes.
- Defra will work with MHCLG ahead of SR19 to look at the flood and coast funding allocation with a view to seeking an increase in funding, and seeking to make flood and coast a visible funding line (as this is important to Thérèse Coffey).
- Defra has no further ask of the Environment Agency in terms of data/input at present.

Coastal Group Chairs meetings

A quarterly catch up telecon took place on the 28th September and the next face to face meeting is scheduled for 28th November in London. A draft agenda will be circulated for comment but the SMP Refresh work will be a key focus for the meeting once again alongside the National FCERM Strategy and the Coastal Adaptation work.

Andy Shore
18.10.18