

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOODING AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by Shepway District Council to provide a public statement of the Council's approach to flood and coastal defence in its district.

2. Background

2.1 The [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#) has overall responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence 'operating authorities' which Shepway District Council is one.

2.2 The [Environment Agency](#) is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. As detailed in the [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#), this is a strategy designed to ensure that the roles of all involved in managing risk are clearly defined.

2.3 Shepway District Council works with key partners in planning local flood risk management works on minor watercourses. As well as working with Lead Local Flood Authorities and others to ensure that risks are effectively managed. But in summary our most significant risks are;

- Coastal Flooding
- Pent Stream – Rapid response catchment
- Fluvial Flooding from the Nailbourne
- Surface Water Flooding - Folkestone

2.4 The [Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#) was introduced to provide for better and more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses. The Act places a duty on all risk management authorities to co-operate with each other. The Act created the new role of 'Lead Local Flood Authority'. Kent County Council is the lead for the district and oversees issues in relation to local flooding caused by surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. They have published a [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) to

comply with the Act. The Act also requires flood and coastal erosion risk management authorities to aim to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development when exercising their flood and coastal erosion risk management functions.

2.5 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence. Included in the policy is the requirement for each operating authority to publish a policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aim and objectives in their area. This policy statement fulfils that requirement.

3. How will the Council deliver the Government's aims and objectives?

3.1 Shepway District Council acknowledges and supports the Government's aims and objectives for flood and coastal erosion. Our statement will be consistent with them, as follows:

Objective a – To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.

Provision of flood warning systems is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. However, Shepway District Council recognises its related and important role in emergency planning and response. We will therefore:

- Ensure that our emergency plans include appropriate arrangements for responding to flooding emergencies and that such plans are reviewed, in consultation with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- Maintain an awareness of the Environment Agency's flood warning dissemination plan for our area and contribute to its implementation as necessary; and
- Play an agreed role in any flood warning emergency exercises organised by the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority covering our area.

Objective b – to encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

Shepway District Council will:

- Provide an adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound approach to providing a flood and coastal defence service.
- Adopt a strategic approach to the provision of flood and coastal defences, particularly by assessing any potentially wider effects of proposed defences. To this end we will continue to play a full role both within the South East

Coastal Group and in the development of Shoreline Management Plans and Local Environment Agency Plans covering the district.

- Continue to participate in the East Kent Engineering Partnership which was formed as a sub group of the South East Coastal Group consisting of five local authorities; Shepway, Dover, Thanet, Canterbury and Swale. The group meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and co-ordinate current and future coastal schemes and maximise any opportunity for shared working.
- Aim to provide sustainable flood and coastal defences which provide social and/or economic benefits to people whilst taking account of natural processes and which avoid committing future generations to inappropriate defence options.
- Ensure wherever possible that all works are carried out in accordance with best practice and deliver best value for money including (a) keeping up to date with policy and technical developments in flood and coastal defence, in particular by reference to DEFRA/Environment Agency guidance; (b) consulting the Environment Agency on flood defence options to ensure that best practice is adopted and shared; and (c) using appropriately qualified experts to advise on analysis and design of works or programmes of management.
- Consider alternative approaches to funding where appropriate, such as Public Private Partnerships.
- Where appropriate seek contributions from developers or other direct beneficiaries of works, in accordance with Environment Agency guidance.
- Ensure that appropriate maintenance regimes are in place for flood and coastal defences for which the Council takes responsibility.
- Seek to ensure that private landowners are made aware of their responsibilities for maintenance when works are identified affecting private land.
- Make publicly available the Council's expenditure plans for flood and coastal defence maintenance and capital works within the existing budget reporting mechanisms.
- Play a positive role in fulfilling our statutory and other responsibilities for furthering nature conservation, including achievement of the Government's environmental obligations and targets.
- Co-operate with Natural England and the Environment Agency in completing and implementing Coastal Habitat Management Plans covering our area, drawing on English Nature/Environment Agency guidance for plan production.
- Start early liaison with Natural England, Environment Agency and all relevant local stakeholders on all future coastal projects. Consult and advise on full extent of any proposed works and location with appropriate necessary mitigation measures to be put in place to protect the ecology and designated sites.

- When carrying out flood and coastal defence works, seek opportunities for environmental enhancement, and mitigate damage to environmental interest and to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans. We will monitor all losses and gains of such habitats as a result of these operations.

Objective c – to discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

- As the local planning authority for the district, Shepway District Council will take account of flooding and coastal erosion risks in all matters relating to development control, including development plans and individual planning applications.

4. Our assessment of the risk of flooding and coastal erosion in our area and what we will do to reduce or manage that risk.

Flood and coastal defence responsibilities

- 4.1 Apart from certain obligations to protect internationally important habitats under the EU Habitats Directive, all flood and coastal defence works are undertaken under permissive powers. This means that operating authorities such as Shepway District Council are not obliged to carry out flood and coastal defence works. It is also important to note that the Council does not normally accept responsibility for maintenance of flood defences on private land, this is the responsibility of the landowner.
- 4.2 Shepway District Council is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on ordinary watercourses which are not within the area of an internal drainage board and coast protection on all frontages in the authority's area.
- 4.3 The flood and coastal defences that are owned or managed by the Council are detailed in the Environment Agency return.
- 4.4 The Environment Agency is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on designated main rivers.
- 4.5 Culverts under roads are generally the responsibility of the relevant Highways Authority (Kent County Council or the Highways Agency).

Assessment of flood risk

- 4.6 Flood risk on ordinary watercourses in Shepway is managed by the Council or the Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board.
- 4.7 The Pent Stream is located in Folkestone and has been identified by the Environment Agency as a Rapid Response Catchment. It is the only

watercourse in Kent that poses a real threat to life, due to its unpredictable nature and the vulnerability of its catchment. The Environment Agency are currently developing a flood warning system for the Pent.

- 4.8 The Royal Military Canal is classified as a main river and the Environment Agency is responsible for flood risk management.
- 4.9 Maps showing indicative flood risk for both inland and coastal areas have been published by the Environment Agency and are available on their [website](#).
- 4.10 More local information on coastal flood risk is contained in the South Foreland to Beachy Head [Shoreline Management Plan](#).

Action to reduce or manage flood risks

- 4.11 The Environment Agency administers a flood warning service that provides advanced notice of when flooding from rivers and the sea is likely to occur. This service provides the main means by which risk management authorities including Shepway District Council are alerted to potential flooding events. Flood warning procedures are in place for the following locations:
- East Stour between Sellindge and Ashford
 - Coastal areas from Folkestone to St Mary's Bay.
 - Coastal area from Littlestone Golf Course to Dungeness.
 - Coastal area from Dungeness to Rye.
 - New Romney Sewage Arm.
 - Pent Stream, Folkestone (from February 2016)
- 4.12 Shepway District Council has included plans for responding to both major and minor flooding in its emergency planning procedures and has arrangements for cascading warnings received from the Environment Agency to relevant Council services.
- 4.13 The Council will ensure that regular maintenance is carried out on the flood defences and channels which it owns, or for which it accepts responsibility, so that they operate at optimum efficiency. Where the responsibility for maintenance rests with a landowner, we will if necessary seek to secure co-operation in ensuring appropriate maintenance takes place.
- 4.14 By following Government guidance on development in flood risk areas in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) and the locally produced [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#), the Council acting as a local planning authority will ensure that risks are further minimised. This includes measures for ensuring sustainable urban drainage systems to control surface water run off.

Assessment of coastal erosion risks

- 4.15 The District is covered by the [South Foreland to Beachy Head Shoreline Management Plan](#). This is a high level document concerned with present and future coastal management.
- 4.16 The Environment Agency provides guidance on the future predicted rate of erosion for the coastline in England and Wales. [Coastal Erosion maps](#) are available on their website and provide details of the likely rate of erosion based upon current and future shoreline management policy.
- 4.17 The [Folkestone to Cliff End Flood and Erosion Strategy](#) sets out the Environment Agency's plan to manage flood and erosion risk along this coastline. The Strategy identifies schemes to protect over 20,000 residential and non-residential properties that are at risk of flooding and erosion over the next 100 years. There are five priority schemes that when implemented will complete the chain of defences within the Strategy area.

Action to reduce or manage coastal erosion risks

- 4.18 The Council has an active programme of capital coast protection and flood defence works.
- 4.19 The £16m coast protection scheme between Hythe and Folkestone was completed in 2004 and is now maintained twice yearly to uphold 1 in 200 year event protection levels.
- 4.20 Major sea improvement schemes have also taken place at Littlestone, St Mary's Bay and Dymchurch.
- 4.21 The district's beaches are continually changing as a result of dynamic coastal environment and significant volume of shingle is accreted at Dungeness. The Environment Agency mechanically recycles the material on this frontage to ensure the standard of protection is not compromised. This also takes place along the Folkestone to Hythe frontage where the movement of shingle is generally in an easterly direction. Shepway District Council recycles the shingle on this frontage to maintain the standard of protection to prevent wave overtopping and so protect the sea wall.

5. Emergency Planning and Response

- 5.1 Shepway District Council discharges its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 by:
- Contributing to and supporting the Kent Resilience Forum.
 - Maintaining a Emergency Plans, which includes specific documents on flooding response

- Ensuring that specific officers are trained to assist in an emergency response.
 - Community interaction in vulnerable areas.
- 5.2 Shepway District Council maintains the following plans in relation to responding to flooding issues:
- [Shepway Local Multi-Agency Flood Plan](#)
 - [Romney Marsh Diversion and Evacuation Route Plan](#)
 - [Shepway District Council Major Emergency Plan.](#)

6. Partnerships and review of this policy statement.

- 6.1 The Council has set out its policy and approach to flood and coastal defence. We recognise the need to work in partnership with central Government Lead Local Flood Authorities and other operating authorities. Our local population also have an important part to play, in recognising the vital importance of watercourses in controlling flood risk and the need to avoid blockages, whether by dumping rubbish or obstructing flows in other ways. We ask members of the public to let us know of any problems which might increase the risk of flooding or coastal erosion.
- 6.2 Shepway District Council intends to review this policy statement every three years, when it will be revised and reissued as necessary. Meanwhile, the Council welcomes any comments on the approach and policies set out in this statement.
- 6.3 It is intended that this Policy Statement will be a working document and that continued monitoring and amendments will be made as flood risk areas are more accurately identified.

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