



COASTAL PROTECTION STRATEGY

CONSULTANCY SERVICES DIVISION

First Issued September 2001

COASTAL PROTECTION STRATEGY

CONTENTS

- 1. [INTRODUCTION](#).....3
- 2. [THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK](#).....3
- 3. [RESPONSIBILITIES](#)5
- 4. [DEFRA HIGH LEVEL TARGETS](#).....5
- 5. [STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLANS](#)6
- 6. [NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL'S POLICY ON COAST PROTECTION AND FLOOD DEFENCE](#).....7
- 7. [AREAS OF OPERATION](#).....8
- 8. [EXISTING AND POTENTIAL INFLUENCES](#)10
- 9. [STAFF RESOURCES](#).....13
- 10. [FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS](#)13
- 11. [NFDC COAST PROTECTION STRATEGY](#)14

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Abbreviations and Definitions
- Appendix 3 - MAFF High Level Targets
- Appendix 4 - Target 3 - Policy Statement

COAST PROTECTION STRATEGY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Coast Protection function was reviewed, and the first Coast Protection Strategy document prepared, in 1987.
- 1.2 There have been a number of changes affecting the coast protection function since the Strategy document was adopted. The main ones are:
 - 11.10 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) formerly the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) set out a new strategic management framework for coast protection (MAFF, 1995); this required all local authorities exercising powers under the Coast Protection Act (1949) to develop Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs), and subsequently Coastal Defence Strategies (CDS).
 - 11.11 From 1st April 1996 the Environment Agency (Agency) assumed the flood defence functions previously exercised by the National Rivers Authority (NRA).
 - 11.12 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (formerly the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF)) High Level Targets came into operation on 1st April 2000.
- 1.6 This Coast protection Strategy document has now been comprehensively revised to incorporate the changes that have occurred since the last revision.

2. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 Coast protection works, that is works to prevent erosion and encroachment by the sea, are carried out within the legal framework provided by the Coast Protection Act 1949 (the Act), which applies to the coastline of Great Britain. Powers to carry out works are mainly vested in 92 maritime district and unitary councils in England.
- 2.2 The coastline of England, for coast protection purposes, is 2981 km long, and approximately 570 km (or about 20%) of coastline are protected against erosion. Many of these defences have been built privately and are maintained by "private" frontagers, including government departments, nationalised industries, county councils, port and harbour authorities, commercial organisations and private individuals.
- 2.3 In addition, some 560 km of coastline are protected against flooding by walls or banks maintained by the Environment Agency using powers conferred by the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Act 1994. Substantial lengths of flood banks also protect M O D property.
- 2.4 For the purposes of the operation of the Coast Protection Act the New Forest District Council (NFDC) has 60 km of coastline, which includes approximately 9km of frontages on the Beaulieu and Lymington Rivers. The shoreline on the upper reaches of the Lymington River and Beaulieu River are not regarded as coastline by the Act.
- 2.5 Powers given to public authorities are, in general, permissive, thereby recognising the rights and obligations of riparian owners and other individuals, and giving such authorities a degree of discretion over public expenditure priorities. However, the

Government does expect the powers to be exercised when necessary. If it was made a duty to exercise the relevant powers, public authorities could be open to claims for compensation should flooding and property damage occur as a result of private individuals not maintaining or providing coast protection and if the public bodies have not taken any action.

- 2.6 The Act establishes Maritime (or Unitary) District Councils as "Coast Protection Authorities" and vests in them general permissive powers to carry out "Coast Protection Work", which is defined as "any work of construction, alteration, improvement, repair, maintenance, demolition or removal for the purpose of the protection of any land...". Protection is defined as "protection against erosion or encroachment by the sea". The Act also lays down the limits of its application by defining "excluded waters". It does this by defining boundaries, mainly across rivers, estuaries, harbours and the like, above which the Act does not apply.
- 2.7 The procedures for carrying out new coast protection works (i.e. capital expenditure) are laid down in Sections 5 and 6 of the Act. They include:
- (a) Advertise proposals in one or more local newspapers.
 - (b) Notify the Environment Agency of proposals;
 - (c) Notify neighbouring coast protection authorities, County Council, and other affected bodies;
 - (d) Obtain planning approval;
 - (e) Obtain agreement of the owner of the site if the Council is not the owner;
 - (f) If appropriate, obtain a licence under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 for the element of works below High Water Mark;
 - (g) Notify the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions; and
 - (h) Carry out an appropriate environmental assessment if required to do so by environmental legislation.
- 2.8 An application has to be made to the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for approval. The application includes: -
- 11Details of the proposals;
 - 12Engineer's report;
 - 13Cost/benefit analysis;
 - 14Evidence of compliance with strategic objectives set out within Shoreline Management Plans and Coastal Defence Strategies.
 - 15Evidence that all appropriate procedures has been carried out.
- 2.9 There is a right of objection to the District Council's proposals. If appropriate, the Minister will either order a local enquiry to be held or give to the objector (and others appearing to be affected by the works) an opportunity of being heard by an appointed person. Special provisions involving joint Ministerial decisions apply where the Environment Agency, or certain other public bodies make an objection.
- 2.10 Section 5(6) of the Act is used in emergencies. This gives coast protection authorities powers to waive most of the normal procedures, if they consider that the work is

urgently needed, and is normally used to deal with severe storm damage. Approval to such works and grant aid can be sought retrospectively.

- 2.11 Works proposed by 'private' land owners require the approval of the District Council: power is available to require 'private' land owners to maintain coast protection works on their land. The Council's role also extends beyond its boundaries, in that there is a need to assess consultations made by adjacent coast protection authorities in connection with their proposals.
- 2.12 Works of repair and maintenance, carried out by the District Council, do not require prior approval or Planning Permission. However, the approval of other affected bodies may be required. These could include Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR), English Nature, Crown Estate Commissioners, Water Authorities, Environment Agency, adjacent Maritime Councils, Private Landowners and bodies having nature conservancy, or amenity interests.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 DEFRA - The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (formerly MAFF) is the Government department with overall policy responsibility for flood defence and coast protection in England. It promotes and administers the statutory framework for flood defence and coast protection.
- 11.10 Environment Agency (Agency) - Under the Environment Act (EA) 1995 the Agency has a duty to exercise a general supervision over all matters relating to flood defence in England and Wales. The Agency is also a formal consultee on certain planning and development control matters relating to coast protection and flood defence.
- 3.3 District Councils - A maritime district council has permissive powers under the Coast Protection Act (1949), although they are expected to exercise these powers by central government High Level Targets (see 4.4).

4. DEFRA HIGH LEVEL TARGETS

- 4.1 In November 1999 MAFF (now DEFRA) published the Government's High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Defence (appendix 2) and the Elaboration of the Environment Agency's Flood Defence Supervisory Duty.
- 4.2 The High Level Targets came into operation on 1 April 2000. Their purpose is to ensure a more certain delivery of the Government's aims and objectives for flood and coastal defence by the individual operating authorities.
- 4.4 The first target requires each operating authority to publish a policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aims and objectives in their area. While flood and coastal defence legislation is generally permissive, the Government expects all operating authorities to exercise their powers, and to respond to flood and coastal defence risk in a responsible way. All operating authorities are therefore expected to produce policy statements. This Council's policy statement is included as Appendix 3, and was approved under Minute 232 of Policy and Resources Committee on 16 May 2001.

5. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLANS

11.10 In 1995 MAFF introduced a new strategic framework to encourage better cooperation between operating authorities and coastal stakeholders, and to ensure a holistic approach to coast protection and flood defence. The strategic approach provides three tiers of management of the coast.

12 Shoreline management plans.

13 Coastal defence strategies

14 Coast protection schemes.

This framework is non-statutory, however, any organisations that do not participate within the SMP management framework will not be awarded DEFRA grant towards the costs of coast protection schemes.

14.10 A shoreline management plan is a strategic policy document that provides generalised strategies for long stretches of coast (typically 50-100km), which are divided into management units (typically several km long) based on the following considerations.

- Coastal Processes and Monitoring;
- Natural and Human Environment
- Economics;

14.11 One of four policy options is assigned to each management unit within an SMP; these are: hold the line, managed retreat, do-nothing and advance the line. These policies provide the basic policy framework for Coast Protection and are also used to inform planning policy with the District Local plan, identifying zones at risk from erosion.

14.12 SMPs usually cross the boundaries of several local authorities and are developed in partnership with these operating authorities. New Forest District Council is a partner in two SMPs: the Western Solent and Southampton Water (Halcrow, 1998) and Poole and Christchurch Bays (Halcrow, 1999).

14.13 Coastal defence strategies are the instrument for detailed implementation of shoreline management plans, usually covering a number of management units; this ensures that coastal erosion and flooding problems are dealt with in a strategic manner, rather than on a parochial local basis. They include detailed assessment of economics, a range of technical solutions and also environmental assessment of the management options. The output is a prioritised programme of works and management programmes, including preferred engineering options. Maritime District Councils are encouraged by DEFRA to develop coastal defence strategies for frontages that may require engineering works in the future.

5.6 New Forest District Council is currently developing two coastal strategy plans: one for Christchurch Bay and one for the Western Solent.

5.7 Coast protection schemes are specific capital projects that arise from the strategy studies; they typically include a phased programme of works, maintenance and monitoring which usually have a managed design life of 50 years. Reviews of scheme performance are required every five years. Schemes are eligible for grant aid by DEFRA, but can be promoted only by Maritime District Councils or the Environment Agency. Schemes are normally promoted only on frontages owned directly by the local

authority as landowner, although they can be promoted on privately owned frontages where a contribution towards scheme costs may be sought from interested organisations.

11.10 Reviews of the SMPs are recommended at intervals of 5 years. An SMP review for the Western Solent and Southampton Water SMP should commence in 2002, on this basis. It is suggested that this review should not commence until the coastal defence strategy studies for the Western Solent have been completed. Similarly, the review of the Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP is due to be updated commencing in 2004; this will be informed by the Christchurch Bay Strategy.

5.9 Coastal management plans provide a framework for holistic management of the coast. Engineering, recreation, planning, environmental health, and safety are all considered in a balanced manner, in conjunction with local policy aims. NFDC has prepared a Coastal Management Plan (1997); this is currently under review by a multidisciplinary in-house management team. An implementation schedule provides a range of aspirations for future development, some of which may be funded through Coastal Protection capital programme. The document is non-statutory but provides valuable links between the District Local Plan and the Shoreline Management Plans

6. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL'S POLICY ON COAST PROTECTION AND FLOOD DEFENCE

6.1 The Council's policy, approved at the same time as this document, is:

- (i) The Council will exercise its permissive powers to help alleviate or control coastal erosion of both public and private property, when central government grant aid can be achieved in support of the schemes.
- (ii) The Council will only progress capital works when in receipt of central government grant
- (ii) The Council will continue to maintain existing structures under its ownership and control, to the standards identified within coastal defence strategies and beach management plans.
- (iii) The Council will adopt the strategic framework developed by DEFRA for undertaking and implementing shoreline management plans, coastal defence strategy plans, beach management plans, strategic regional monitoring and coastal protections schemes.
- (iv) The Council will seek to work with other stakeholders with interests in management of the coast eg. Lymington Harbour Commissioners, English Nature, local estate owners, in a cooperative manner and where appropriate in partnership with these organisations.
- (v) The Council will continue to monitor coastal processes and structures, and manage the data, to a level that will provide adequate management information for design and implementation of strategic plans and coastal protection schemes.
- (vi) The Council supports the Government's aims and objectives for flood and coastal defence and has set out its plans for delivering these in a Policy Statement required under the DEFRA High Level Targets.

- (vii) The Council will continue to update and implement the strategy set out within the coastal management plan.

7. AREAS OF OPERATION

7.1 There are five main areas of operation:

- 11 DEFRA High Level Targets – coastal defences
- 12 Works – Maintenance and New Works
- 13 General advice to the public and within NFDC
- 14 Strategic coastal process research and monitoring
- 15 Strategic plan development and implementation

DEFRA High Level Targets – Flood Defences

7.2 There are two specific areas of work the Council has to carry out under the High Level Targets that relate to coastal defences. These are covered in:

- 11 Target 4 – National Flood and Coastal Defence Database
- 12 Target 5 – Flood defence inspections and assessment of flood risk

7.3 Under Target 4 the Agency is tasked with developing and maintaining a National Flood and Coast Defence Database. The district council, as an operating authority, is required to provide the Agency with information in respect of its area of work for inclusion in the database. The Council is required to identify and inspect coastal defences, in its own and private ownership. Guidance is provided in an Agency document, “National Sea & Defence Surveys – Condition Assessment Manual” and the inspection details have to be provided in an agreed format for inclusion in the database. This Council completed this work during 2000.

7.4 Under Target 5 district councils have to put a programme in place for the regular inspection of all of the coast protection defence assets they have identified and included in the database. The frequency of inspections should be risk based, and at the time of preparation of this Strategy document, guidance on how this should be carried out is still awaited from DEFRA.

Works – Maintenance and New Works

11.10 The Council will maintain or improve or construct new works, but only so far as may be necessary to prevent flooding or erosion, and remedying or mitigating any damage caused by flooding or erosion. A planned annual maintenance programme makes provision for maintaining the standard of existing defences.

7.6 The LDA 1994 places environmental duties on local authorities while exercising their statutory powers in respect of coast protection and flood defence. When considering and carrying out coast protection or flood defence works local authorities must take into account both the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. An environmental assessment will be necessary for certain works, particularly where planning approval or DEFRA approval is required.

General advice to the public and within NFDC

(a) Development Control/Planning

7.7 The Government's policy is to reduce the risks to people and the developed and natural environment from erosion. It therefore looks to the local planning authorities to ensure that flood and erosion risk is properly taken into account in the planning of developments to reduce the risk of flooding and erosion, and the damage that caused by these processes. The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLGR) has issued new guidance for England on development and coastal risk. The new document is entitled Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPG25)

7.7.1 PPG25 states that:

11The susceptibility of land to flooding and erosion is a material planning consideration;

12The Environment Agency has the lead role in providing advice on flood issues, at a strategic level and in relation to planning applications;

13Policies in development plans should outline the consideration which will be given to flood and erosion issues, recognising the uncertainties that are inherent in the prediction of flooding and erosion, and that these risks are expected to increase as a result of climate change;

14Planning authorities should apply the precautionary principle to the issue of flood and erosion risk, using a risk-based search sequence to avoid such risk where possible and managing it elsewhere;

7.7.2 PPG25 emphasises that the primary responsibility for safeguarding land and other property against natural hazards such as flooding remains with the owner and that those proposing particular developments are responsible for:

11Providing an assessment of whether any proposed development is likely to be affected by flooding and whether it will increase flood risk elsewhere and of the measures proposed to deal with these effects and risks; and

12Satisfying the local planning authority that any flood risk to the development or additional risk arising from the proposal will be successfully managed with the minimum environmental effect, to ensure the safe development and secure future occupancy of the site.

It is then for the local planning authority, advised as necessary by the Agency, to determine an application for planning permission taking account of all material considerations, including the issue of flood risk and how it might be managed or mitigated.

7.7.3 Although the Agency is the formal consultee on certain coast protection and flood defence matters, the Consultancy Services Division of the Environment Services Directorate is consulted on all planning applications. Development proposals are checked by the Coastal Group, in Consultancy Services, to establish compliance with coastal policy.

7.7.4 It is important to note that the Council's Coastal Group are not acting in the capacity of a formal consultee and that there are no powers within the planning process by which refusal can be directed on coast protection grounds. The Council's Development

Control Division must form its own opinion, and make the appropriate decisions, having received advice from consultees.

(b) General advice to the public

7.8 A large number of requests are made to the Coastal Group for information relating to the coast. These requests often relate to information on risks of erosion and flooding related to property purchase. Specific factual advice only is provided in such instances; no judgements are made on the actual risks apart from specific reference to those identified within the shoreline management plan and the district local plan. The coastal group is inundated with requests for information for school and student projects and provides appropriate advice and information. Information is currently being prepared for dissemination via the Councils Website to relieve pressures relating to this area of workload.

8. EXISTING AND POTENTIAL INFLUENCES

11.10 There are a number of developments on the horizon that will affect the way in which NFDC views its coastal defence responsibilities. In particular, there is increasing recognition that coastal defences need to be considered in a context rather wider than that dictated by the boundaries of individual Local Authority areas.

8.2 Cost/Benefit Considerations

For a capital coast protection project to succeed in obtaining approval it must demonstrate a benefit that is greater than the cost. It would currently be unusual for a scheme demonstrating a benefit cost ratio of less than 1.5 to qualify for grant aid approval. The calculation has generally relied upon quantifiable benefits, such as land values; it has been difficult to draw in more nebulous areas like 'amenity and conservation'. DEFRA is currently undertaking research to enable the present concept of cost/benefit to be reviewed.

8.3 The success of coast protection scheme applications is complicated further, by a national scheme of prioritisation that ranks each of the applications, based on a range of assessment criteria on a national basis. As the national budget for grant is finite, only those schemes that have the greatest urgency are funded, although permission to conduct works that can be funded from other sources may be given. The priority scoring system is currently under review and the outcomes of this may impact significantly on future capital programmes.

11.10 Strategic regional monitoring

New Forest District Council is coordinating a DEFRA funded regional programme, in conjunction with other local authorities and the Environment Agency in the south-east, to formulate a strategic region wide approach to coastal monitoring and data management. A framework has been developed which will provide a region- wide data collection and management programme on a consistent level.

11.11 The programme will be funded via the DEFRA grant aid process and will relieve some of the revenue funded monitoring work currently undertaken. The programme is likely to be funded in the same manner as the SMP programme, with a single lead authority attracting all of the grant aid and SCA and seeking supplementary contributions from all participating local authorities; this will ensure that there is no local residual burden on the lead authority.

11.12 New Forest District Council's existing monitoring programme is to be used as the model for this region wide programme and the project steering group anticipates that NFDC would be the best placed organisation to host this initiative. This proposal demonstrates the confidence that other authorities have in the NFDC approach to shoreline management.

11.13 The programme will have major resource implications and a proposal to manage the programme is under preparation; this will investigate staffing and financial implication as well as technical aspects and procurement.

8.8 Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline (SCOPAC)

In 1986 District and County Councils and the Environment Agency, between Weymouth and Worthing, established a Standing Conference to act as a forum for the exchange of information about the coastline and to promote research. NFDC is represented at Member and Officer level. SCOPAC's main focus relates to strategic management of the coast in context with the DEFRA management framework and the powers vested in local authorities. The Conference is supported by various officer sub-groups considering various topics, including:

- 11 Shoreline management planning
- 12 Climate change
- 13 Cross boundary sediment transport processes
- 14 Education
- 15 Dissemination of information
- 16 Research and monitoring

8.9 Solent forum

The Solent forum has a broader remit than SCOPAC, taking a wider view of general coastal management issues and principles. Its membership includes local authorities, landowners, industry, recreational, conservation and local interest groups. Its role is primarily in exchange of information and debate on coastal issues, although it is also seeking to develop some regional research programmes.

8.10 The Solent European Marine Sites Management Scheme is a Hampshire County Council led initiative arising from EU legislation on management of habitats. It will provide a nature conservation scheme of management for the area between Chichester and Southampton by 2002. The CHaMP for the Solent, which will identify possible areas of habitat replacement, will also have been progressed prior to the start of preliminary discussions for the SMPs. These conservation based management schemes will inform updating of the SMPs.

Best Value

8.11 The Government has placed a duty of best value on local authorities to deliver services to clear standards – of cost and quality – by the most economic, efficient and effective means available. It provides a challenging performance framework that requires local authorities to publish annual best value performance plans and review all of their services every five years. In the best value reviews local authorities must show how they are continuously improving their services.

8.12 Coast protection and flood defence will be included as part of the civil engineering package to be reviewed during 2002/2003. A considerable amount of preparation work

has already been carried out within Consultancy Services and in conjunction with other local authorities nationally, particularly in the area of benchmarking and performance indicators.

- 8.13 The best value review procedure is very rigorous and searching, including thorough benchmarking and consultation processes. The review will identify areas for change and improvement. This in turn will possibly result in changes to the Council's policy on coast protection and this Strategy document.

Environmental Impact

- 11.10 An important feature of environmental protection legislation affecting coast protection is the requirement for environmental assessment of coast protection works.
- 8.15 Coast protection and flood defence proposals can have significant adverse effects on nature and landscape conservation, water supply, recreation patterns and features of cultural and amenity value. In extreme instances, these may make the project unacceptable, despite all efforts at mitigation. In most cases, however, adverse effects can be minimised if the project is designed and implemented sensitively. Consideration must be given to the use of sustainable management solutions that create habitat, and use dynamic solutions such as beach recharge. Whenever possible opportunities should be taken to incorporate environmental improvements to help the conservation of wildlife and landscape.
- 8.16 Where coast protection and flood defence works require DEFRA approval and/or planning permission, an environmental impact assessment will be required. The implications of carrying out an environmental impact assessment are a very important consideration when planning coast protection and flood defence projects.

Climate Change

- 8.17 There is mounting evidence that the global climate is changing as a result of human activity. Sea levels will rise globally as a result of thermal expansion of the oceans, melt-water from alpine ice and snow from the polar ice caps. The current best estimate is for a 210mm rise between 2000 and 2050. However this is an uncertain estimate and the figure could be as low as 100mm and as high as 550mm. To the climate-induced sea-level rise has to be added the movement of land, which is generally falling in the southeast, giving a combined estimated rise in the southeast of 410mm by 2050.
- 8.18 For coastal defence schemes DEFRA have adopted a relative sea-level rise of 6mm per year between 2000 and 2050 for the Agency's Southern Region.
- 8.19 Initial research has suggested that severe events will become more frequent.
- 8.20 It is essential that the latest information on the effects of climate change be obtained to ensure that solutions to flooding are both robust and sustainable. The Government has established the UK Climate Impacts Programme to help organisations to assess their vulnerability to climate change and plan appropriate adaptation strategies. The climate change scenarios for the UK, published in 1998, are being revised and are expected to be published in 2002.
- 8.21 New Forest District Council is working in partnership with other local authorities on a SCOPAC funded project entitled preparing for the impacts of climate change within the SCOPAC region. This project has identified a generic approach to risk assessment and

offers potential management approaches to a range of defined climate change scenarios.

9. STAFF RESOURCES

11.10 Staffing levels relating to the coastal group revenue budget for 2000/2001 were:

	FTE
Coastal administration	0.97
Coastal maintenance	2.11
Coastal monitoring and research	1.94
General public and student advice	0.37
Beach hut wardening	0.63
Coastal safety	0.28
Total	6.23 FTE

9.2 There is also a design team, which works on capital coast protection schemes, coastal defence strategies and shoreline management plans that relate to the coast protection function. This typically provides workload for 4 full time equivalent staff, but varies according to the capital programme and DEFRA grant aid approval.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Approval by DEFRA normally carries with it a Government grant towards the expenditure. Although Section 21 of the Coast Protection Act does not distinguish between capital works and maintenance works, it is current Government policy to pay grant only on approved capital works and for beach management plans in conjunction with beach recharge projects.
- 10.2 Subject to a minimum scheme cost, below which no grant is payable, grants ranging between 24% and 70% of the eligible cost of the scheme are payable according to the circumstances, and local tax burden. Recently grant rates awarded to New Forest District Council have ranged between 55%-70%.
- 10.3 Where DEFRA makes a grant towards a scheme the County Council is also required by the Act to make a contribution to the cost of the scheme, the amount to be agreed between the two councils. In practice it is usual for the County Council to contribute 50% of the balance of the cost after deduction of the Government grant.
- 10.4 The Government makes a separate capital allocation known as supplementary credit approval (SCA) (i.e. permission to spend - not grant) for coastal defence works, although this system of capital controls may change. The Council borrows the money to pay for the cost of the scheme net of grant. The Supplementary Credit Approvals are included in the Council's Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) on which the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is based.
- 10.5 Where works protect substantial properties voluntary contributions may be sought from the property owner.

Revenue

10.6 The Government's assessment of what a council should spend, its Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), is calculated each year. Expenditure on coast protection, including repayments of capital loans, is specifically identified in the formula used to calculate the SSA, and the assessment for the next year reflects the previous year's actual expenditure. However, the Government does not meet the total expenditure because the Revenue Support Grant is approximately 60% of the SSA. The balance between the grant and the Council's budget has to be met by the Council's taxpayers.

Bellwin Scheme

10.7 Under the Local Government Act 1972 local authorities can incur expenditure in the event of a major emergency or natural disaster. Where the Council is involved in responding to a major emergency, additional national taxpayers' money may be available to cover some of the related extraordinary costs. Certain costs become eligible under the 'Bellwin Scheme' once expenditure exceeds a threshold of 0.2% of the SSA. The Council has to meet all expenditure to the level of the threshold, after which the Government will provide assistance at 85% of the approved costs retrospectively. The DTLR determines thresholds, and expenditure is cumulative if the scheme is activated more than once a year.

11. NFDC COAST PROTECTION STRATEGY

11.1 The Council's policy (see 5.1) will be implemented via the following strategy.

Operational management

11.2 A planned programme of revenue funded inspections and maintenance works will continue, in order to maintain existing structures under the Council's ownership and control, to the standards identified within coastal defence strategies and beach management plans.

11.3 Capital coast protection schemes will be advanced in accordance with DEFRA scheme approval and guidelines.

11.4 Shoreline management plans, coastal defence strategy plans, beach management plans, strategic regional monitoring and coastal protection schemes will be implemented in accordance with DEFRA guidelines.

11.5 Coastal processes and structures will be monitored through a planned programme. Data will be managed within database and GIS systems, to a level that will provide adequate management information for design and implementation of strategic plans and coastal protection schemes.

DEFRA High Level Targets

11.6 The identification, inspection and monitoring of coastal defences, as required under the High Level Targets, are essential and worthwhile activities. Under the policy statement the Council has agreed to comply with the relevant targets.

11.7 A regular inspection and maintenance programme is to be maintained for all of the publicly and privately owned coast protection works. Details will then be incorporated into the National Flood and Coastal Defence database.

11.8 Work activities under the High Level Targets are ongoing and it is possible that the targets will be modified following the lessons learned from the recent floods and the implementation of any subsequent recommendations and changes in legislation.

Best Value

11.9 The Best Value process will entail a rigorous review of the coast protection service. It is likely that the review will result in a number of recommendations for improvement in how the service is delivered to be implemented from 2003/04 onwards.

Summary of Proposals

11.10 Operational management

Maintain and monitor existing coastal defence systems and advance new capital schemes in accordance with DEFRA guidelines.

11.11 DEFRA High Level Targets

Comply with High Level Targets.

11.12 Strategic Planning

Prepare coastal strategy and shoreline management plans and review these in accordance with DEFRA guidelines

11.13 Best Value

Implement any recommendations on completion of the best value review.

APPENDIX 1

COAST PROTECTION STRATEGY

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

Agency	Environment Agency (for England and Wales)
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (supersedes MAFF)
DETR	Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (Supersedes DETR)
EA 1995	Environment Act 1995
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
NRA	National Rivers Authority
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WRA 1991	Water Resources Act 1991

Flood and coastal defence High level targets

Contents

Foreword

Part 1: Introduction

Part 2: DEFRA aims and objectives

Part 3: Approach adopted

Part 4: Targets

Target 1 - Policy statements

Target 2 - Provision of flood warnings

Target 3 - Emergency exercises and emergency plans

Target 4 - National Flood and Coastal Defence Database

Target 5 - Flood defence inspections and assessment of flood risk

Target 6 - Coast protection inspections and assessment of coastal erosion risk

Target 7 - Expenditure programmes

Target 8 - Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs)

Target 9 - Biodiversity

Target 10 - Water Level Management Plans (WLMPs)

Target 11 - Coastal Habitat Management Plans (CHaMPs)

Target 12 - Development in areas at risk of flooding

Target 13 - Development in areas at risk of coastal erosion

Target 14 - IDB Administration and Membership

Environment Agency's elaboration of its supervisory duty

Foreword

I am acutely aware of the importance of flood and coastal defence for the country. We are an island nation whose coasts and river systems are regularly challenged by storms and other severe weather. Many of us rely on flood and coastal defences for protection of our lives and the possessions we hold dear and if defences are in danger of being breached, we want to be warned so that we can take the necessary action. Flood and coastal defences also play an important role in maintaining our national way of life. They protect important infrastructure and other economic assets. Many wildlife habitats of international importance rely on such defences.

When the Agriculture Select Committee produced its report on flood and coastal defence in August 1998, they were generally supportive of the Government's policies and approach to flood and coastal defence. They did, however, express concern that mechanisms were not in place to ensure that the policy and approach were delivered by the operating authorities "on the ground". As a response to this concern, we are putting into place the targets set out in this paper. The targets are mainly - but not exclusively - directed at the flood and coastal defence operating authorities and cover many of the most important issues in the delivery of the service. They complement work that the Environment Agency has undertaken in response to my call for a seamless and integrated service of flood forecasting, warning and response.

I have been impressed at the degree of support that there has been for the concept of targets, both within the operating authorities and among other bodies with an interest in flood and coastal defence. The targets have been drawn up following extensive consultation, and they have been agreed with representatives of the operating authorities. I particularly welcome the very positive spirit in which the operating authorities have approached the establishment of targets, the great co-operation they have given the Ministry in their development, and their evident commitment to implement them.

The document also contains the Environment Agency's elaboration of its flood defence supervisory duty. This has been produced in parallel to the targets, and is designed to complement them. It too has been agreed with representatives of the other operating authorities.

We will be monitoring achievement of targets, and keeping them under review. There are significant reporting requirements and I shall be ensuring that Parliament is kept informed of developments. Meanwhile, I commend them to all those involved in flood and coastal defence.

[signed]

Elliott Morley MP

Minister for Fisheries and the Countryside
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
November 1999

High level targets for flood and coastal defence

Part 1: Introduction

1.1 This paper contains high level targets for flood and coastal defence which will operate from 1 April 2000.

1.2 In August 1998 the Agriculture Select Committee published its report on flood and coastal defence. The Government response, published in October 1998, *inter alia* committed DEFRA to prepare a series of high level targets which will be necessary in order to deliver its flood and coastal defence aims and objectives. A set of interim targets were published in May 1999 along with a first elaboration of the Environment Agency's general flood defence supervisory duty.

1.3 In publishing interim targets, MAFF undertook to produce more comprehensive targets to operate from 1 April 2000. The targets in this document fulfil that commitment and have been produced following wide consultation with relevant organisations.

1.4 The targets in this document supersede the interim targets published in May 1999. Where relevant they reflect the elaboration of the Environment Agency's supervisory duty and work flowing from the Agency's Action Plan for implementing the Independent Report on the Easter 1998 floods (the "Bye Report"). As the principal operating authority, and with its general flood defence supervisory responsibilities, the Environment Agency will have a key role in achievement of these targets, through advice to operating authorities, monitoring and reporting.

1.5 In considering the targets, the following definitions might be helpful:

"flood defences" are defences for the alleviation of flooding whether from rivers or the sea;

"coastal defence" is an overarching term that includes both defence from flooding from the sea, and coast protection;

"coast protection" are measures to protect the land against erosion and encroachment by the sea;

"critical ordinary watercourses" are watercourses that are not classified as "main river" but which the Environment Agency and other operating authorities agree are critical because they have the potential to put at risk from flooding large numbers of people and property.

1.6 The targets include requirements to report to MAFF and others on a number of matters. The intention is that reports will be published, so providing greater openness and accountability in the provision of the flood and coastal defence service.

Part 2: MAFF aims and objectives

2.1 The adoption of a series of targets provides a framework for ensuring and demonstrating delivery of the Government's stated policy aims and objectives for flood and coastal defence, as set out in the 1993 Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales. The stated policy aim of MAFF and the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) is:

To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically, environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.

2.2 The key objectives to achieve the policy are:

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

To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

2.3 MAFF's published policy aim and targets are carried forward to its Public Service Agreement (PSA), the target for which is:

By March 2000, publish targets for flood and coastal defence operating authorities which will ensure the effective delivery of sustainable flood defence and coast protection policies and prevent loss of life through flooding (including by timely and effective warning systems).

2.4 The linked Output and Performance Measures are:

The number of lives lost through flooding.

The aggregate benefit:cost ratio for grant aided flood and coastal defence schemes [the aim is to achieve 5:1 or better].

Part 3: Approach adopted

3.1 The targets in this document are intended to facilitate a more certain delivery of national policies and objectives for flood and coastal defence. In particular, operating authorities are being asked to provide policy statements setting out how they will contribute to the delivery of these aims and objectives. The targets also put in place arrangements for a more systematic gathering of information about the nature and status of defences thus facilitating assessment of the integrity of defences and the taking of any necessary remedial action. Reports will be published.

3.2 The aim is to build on best practice, assisting operating authorities to undertake activities that can reasonably be required of them in safeguarding human life as well as economic and environmental assets. Some targets flow from agreed actions following the "Bye Report" for which additional specific funding has already been made available.

3.3 The targets in this paper apply primarily to flood and coastal defence operating authorities. However, some targets apply to local authorities in their capacity as local planning authorities and also as bodies responsible for emergency planning. There are also targets applicable to English Nature. The targets have been prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency, the Local Government Association and the Association of Drainage Authorities, as well as with the Home Office, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, English Nature and other relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations.

3.4 These targets are dynamic; they will be kept under review and updated as necessary. In particular, MAFF is undertaking further research into the economic impacts of flooding and coastal erosion, which might lead to a revision of the Ministry targets and, in turn, revised targets for operating authorities. MAFF aims and objectives will also need to be reviewed in the forthcoming Government Spending Review, leading to a review of targets.

3.5 These targets need to be read alongside the legislation applicable to flood and coastal defence operating authorities, all other statutory requirements including those relating to the environment, and guidance issued by MAFF and other Government Departments.

Part 4: Targets

4.1 The primary aim of targets is to ensure a more certain delivery of MAFF's stated policy aims and objectives for flood and coastal defence and this is directly reflected in the following target. The statements will relate to the area covered by the operating authority and are expected to include general information about the nature of flood and erosion risks in the area including what is defended; where appropriate, the plans for mitigation of that risk, including management and inspection of existing works, and any new works. Statements should also cover issues such as how best practice will be adopted and shared; policies on developer contributions; and commitments to comply with sustainability policies and environmental obligations and targets.

4.2 Local authority statements will be expected additionally to cover their approach to flood and coastal defence aspects of emergency planning and development control, as well as flood warning and advice to local planning authorities.

4.3 The Environment Agency statement will be expected to cover the arrangements for ensuring that local authorities are informed about potential flood risks, so that these can be reflected in their emergency plans and in advice on development control.

4.4 MAFF has produced a template for completing these statements. The appendix mentioned in the template is a list of the targets set out below. A worked example is also available for use by operating authorities when preparing their own policy statements.

Target 1 - Policy statements	By when	By whom
A. Produce, and copy to Environment Agency, MAFF and DETR, a publicly available policy statement setting out plans for delivering the Government's policy aims and objectives.	31 March 2001	All operating authorities
B. Report to MAFF and DETR on: (i) completion of these policy statements; and (ii) information collated from them.	30 September 2001 and subsequently by agreement with MAFF	Environment Agency

Flood warning and emergency response

4.5 The first MAFF objective for flood and coastal defence is:

"to encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems".

4.6 An interim target was for the Environment Agency to produce, by March 2000, "an agreed target for provision of flood warning in terms of population and areas covered". This target is incorporated below. It will be for the Agency, working through flood defence committees, to develop and implement the programme of works to achieve this target. The provision of flood warning systems remains MAFF's highest priority for the provision of grant.

Target 2 - Provision of flood warnings	By when	By whom
In conjunction with local authorities, emergency services and other partners -		
A. Develop a method for categorising the flood risk to an area for flood warning purposes.	1 April 2000	Environment Agency
B. Determine where a flood warning service can be provided and the appropriate dissemination arrangements using the method developed.	1 September 2000	
C. Determine and publish flood warning service standards for each area at risk of flooding.	1 September 2000	
D. Report to MAFF on achievement of service standards.	Annually from 1 April 2001	

4.7 The following targets relate to emergency exercises to test emergency plans, rolling forward and expanding the relevant interim targets. The targets are designed to be complementary to the "standards approach" that Home Office is promulgating with local authority emergency planning departments.

Target 3 - Emergency exercises and emergency plans	By when	By whom
A. Arrange, in conjunction with local authorities, emergency services and other partners, a programme of flood emergency exercises at national, regional and local levels. A national exercise, and an exercise in each Agency region and local area should be conducted by 31 December 2001 (after the introduction of new flood warning codes) and at not more than three-yearly intervals thereafter.	Annually from 1 January 2001	Environment Agency
B. Report to MAFF on: the forward programme of emergency exercises; the results of emergency exercises in the previous year, including lessons learned; and those areas where the Agency and local authorities have, and have not, reviewed and agreed emergency plans within the previous two years.	Annually from 1 January 2001	Environment Agency

Provision of flood and coastal defence measures

4.8 The second MAFF objective is:

"To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures."

4.9 It is not appropriate to set specific targets for the provision of flood and coastal defences. Operating authorities work within a legislative framework that is essentially permissive. MAFF has already provided guidance to operating authorities on the factors which influence investment decisions though final responsibility rests with them, taking account of such guidance and other factors including the availability of resources.

4.10 Consideration will, however, be given later to the establishment of appropriate targets in the light of the results of research, currently being undertaken, on the economic benefits of flood and coastal defence.

4.11 The following targets 4-7 are linked. They build on the creation and maintenance of a new National Flood and Coastal Defence database managed by the Environment Agency from September 2000 (the subject of interim targets). They roll forward and develop various interim targets, particularly for ensuring that information on the database is updated, that defences on the database are inspected, that flooding or erosion risks are assessed, and that appropriate action is taken to ensure the defects are remedied, and that work programmes are provided. In setting these targets account has been taken of the further elaboration of the Environment Agency's general flood defence supervisory role, and the fact that the Agency, while maintaining information about coast protection works on its database, does not have statutory responsibility for coast protection.

4.12 The database is currently being developed by the Agency and details of the structure and the information that it will contain are still under consideration. Particular consideration will be given to structuring the data so that eventually all assets which protect a particular risk area can be readily identified and any changes to the risk profile of each area readily evaluated. The database should also include information on important assets (eg environmental or economic) that are within risk areas. Consideration should also be given to including the facility for monitoring losses or gains in habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans as a result of flood and coastal defence operations (Target 9B).

Target 4 - National Flood and Coastal Defence Database	By when	By whom
A. Develop a National Flood and Coastal Defence Database and maintain it thereafter. The database should include information from other operating authorities (Target 4B) and on assets which provide a flood and coastal defence service that are in private or other ownership.	1 September 2000	Environment Agency (in partnership with other operating authorities)
B. Provide the Environment Agency with information on flood and coastal defence assets that are the responsibility of the operating authority. Such information should be in an agreed format and provided in the first instance by September 2000, and updated within one month of completion of any significant change, including creation, alteration, destruction or abandonment.	1 September 2000 and ongoing thereafter	All operating authorities
C. Reach agreement with the other operating authorities on the means by which private defences will be identified and incorporated in the database.	1 April 2000	Environment Agency
D. Provide timely information from the database to other operating authorities to fulfil their obligations. The detail and frequency of such reports to be agreed, as necessary.	From 1 January 2001	Environment Agency

Target 6 - Coast protection inspections and assessment of coastal erosion risk	By when	By whom
<p>A. Ensure that a programme is in place for the regular* inspection of all coast protection assets included in the database, including those which are in private or other ownership.</p> <p>* The frequency of inspection should be risk based, taking account of factors such as the status, nature and significance of the defence.</p> <p>B. Report to MAFF on its assessment of the risk of coastal erosion from those assets. The report will also set out the action taken (eg to remedy the deficiency, adapt to a lower standard of defence, abandon defence) saying also if it is proposed to use enforcement powers or adopt a defence operated by others. Reports will also detail progress on remedying deficiencies highlighted in previous years' reports. In producing reports, the Groups should draw on information from <i>inter alia</i> inspections, policy statements (Target 1) and the database (Target 4). (This to reflect the necessary phasing adopting a risk-based assessment with comprehensive reporting from April 2002.)</p>	<p>Annually from 1 April 2000</p> <p>Annually from 1 April 2001</p>	<p>Coast protection authorities through Coastal Defence Groups</p>

Target 7 - Expenditure programmes	By when	By whom
<p>Provide to MAFF a prioritised forward programme of capital and maintenance work for the assets on the database. This should cover the current and following 3 year period. Where appropriate, programmes should include proposed expenditure on any assets in third party or other ownership.</p>	<p>Annually from 1 April 2000</p>	<p>All operating authorities</p>

4.13 Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) have been promoted by MAFF as a means for ensuring that coastal defences are planned in a strategic manner and in consultation with relevant interests. The interim target was for SMPs to be completed for the coastline of England by 31 December 1999. However, SMPs are intended to be "living" documents and subject to regular review and updating leading to the following target.

Target 8 - Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs)	By when	By whom
Flowing from the policy statement in Target 1, have in place, and provide to MAFF, a programme for: completing strategy plans necessary to implement SMPs; and updating SMPs in accordance with MAFF guidance planned to be issued in 2000.	December 2001	Relevant operating authorities

4.14 MAFF is committed to playing its part in wider Government policies for the protection of the environment and biodiversity, and acknowledges that flood and coastal defence measures can play a significant part in this. As a minimum, flood and coastal defence measures must be environmentally sound. However, operating authorities are positively encouraged to seek and consider opportunities for environmental enhancement when selecting flood and coastal defence options at a strategic level and in developing schemes. In addition, operating authorities are subject to specific statutory obligations and targets (including measures to protect SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites and SSSIs). It is intended that, through the policy statements (Target 1), operating authorities will acknowledge these requirements, and also set out the arrangements that they have in place for compliance to protect and enhance the environment when carrying out works. The following, more specific targets, will also apply.

Target 9 - Biodiversity	By when	By whom
A. In addition to statutory obligations, when carrying out flood and coastal defence works aim: to avoid damage to environmental interest; to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans; and seek opportunities for environmental enhancement.	Ongoing	All operating authorities
B. Report to the Environment Agency on all losses and gains of habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans as a result of their flood and coastal defence operations.	Annually from 1 April 2001	All operating authorities
C. Report to MAFF on the collated information from Target 9B.	Annually from 1 July 2001	Environment Agency

Target 10 - Water Level Management Plans (WLMPs)	By when	By whom
A. In partnership with English Nature, complete WLMPs: in European sites in other SSSIs. B. Have in place a programme for implementing and reviewing WLMPs (flowing from the policy statement in Target 1). C. Report to MAFF on operating authorities' progress in implementing and reviewing WLMPs against their published programme.	30 March 2000 31 Dec 2000 1 April 2001 Annually from 1 April 2002	Relevant operating authority Relevant operating authority Environment Agency

Target 11 - Coastal Habitat Management Plans (CHaMPs)	By when	By whom
A. Identify sites where a CHaMP is needed and produce a programme for their completion. (NB Consideration is currently being given to the arrangements for inland sites covered by the Habitats Directive. Appropriate targets will be set in due course.) B. Report to MAFF on progress in CHaMP completion.	31 December 2000 Annually from 1 April 2002	English Nature (in partnership with the Environment Agency and other operating authorities).

Development control

4.15 MAFF's third objective for flood and coastal defence is:

"To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion."

4.16 The Environment Agency is a statutory consultee in the preparation of development plans while guidance to local planning authorities (contained within DoE Circular 30/92 "Development and Flood Risk") encourages local authorities to use their planning powers to guide development away from areas that may be affected by flooding, or which would itself increase flood risks or interfere with flood control works or maintenance. Following recommendations from the Agriculture Select Committee in its report on flood and coastal defence, this guidance is being reviewed and updated by DETR. The revised guidance is also expected to emphasise the need to seek contributions from developers towards the cost of flood and coastal defence works necessary as a result of the development. The following targets are complementary to that guidance to LPAs on development in the flood plain and to the Agency's revised internal guidance on the advice to local authorities on development in the flood plain (an interim target). There are also targets relating to development in areas at risk of coastal erosion.

Target 12 - Development in areas at risk of flooding	By when	By whom
Report to MAFF and DETR on: those local authority development plans upon which the Agency have commented, identifying plans which do, and do not, have flood risk statements or policies; and the Agency's response to planning applications, identifying cases where: (i) the Agency sustained objections on flood risk grounds; and (ii) final decisions, either by the LPA or on appeal, were in line with, or contrary to, Agency advice. (This target does not preclude the Agency from taking immediate and relevant action, eg to request Ministerial call-in of particularly significant cases.)	Annually from June 2000	Environment Agency (in partnership with local planning authorities)
Target 13 - Development in areas at risk of coastal erosion	By when	By whom
Report to MAFF and DETR on: local authority development plans identifying the extent to which they contain coastal erosion statements and reflect the assessed risk of coastal erosion as set out in <i>inter alia</i> Shoreline Management Plans; planning applications where coastal erosion was a material consideration and any conflicts between the final decision, either by the LPA or on appeal, with the assessed risks of coastal erosion.	From June 2000	Coast protection authorities through Coastal Defence Groups

Funding and administration

4.17 In its response to the Agriculture Select Committee report on flood and coastal defence, the Government did not accept that changes should be made to the present institutional arrangements for flood and coastal defence. It did, however, agree that a joint MAFF/DETR review should be conducted on the funding mechanisms and this is currently under way. It has been decided that another commitment in relation to the ASC report, consideration of the future need for local flood defence committees (LFDCs), should follow the funding review.

4.18 The following targets are intended to bring about improvements in the present arrangements for IDB administration and membership.

Target 14 - IDB Administration and Membership	By when	By whom
A. Produce and distribute to IDBs guidance on: the means by which efficiency can be improved through amalgamations and consortia; and ensuring that relevant interests are reflected in membership of Boards. B. Report to MAFF on progress in implementing this guidance.	1 June 2000 Annually from 1 June 2001	Association of Drainage Authorities in conjunction with MAFF, Environment Agency and LGA Association of Drainage Authorities

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Flood and Coastal Defence with Emergencies Division
November 1999

See also the **Environment Agency's elaboration of its flood defence supervisory duty**. It addresses issues that are complementary to the above high level targets.

APPENDIX 4
NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD AND COASTAL DEFENCE - FEBRUARY 2001

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by New Forest District Council (NFDC) to provide a public statement of the Council's approach to flood and coastal defence in its area.

Background

1.2 The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence "operating authorities" ie the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards. Responsibilities differ according to the type of operating authority and NFDC's responsibilities are set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 below.

1.3 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence ¹. To ensure a more certain delivery of the aim and objectives by the individual operating authorities the Government has published a series of high level targets ². The first target requires 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 will include their assessment of flooding and coastal erosion risk in their area, and the plans for reducing or managing that risk.

1.4 This policy statement fulfils that requirement. Copies are also available from the Council's offices at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst and Town Hall, Lymington and on ForestNet and the Council's web site. We are also providing a copy to:

the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food;

the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions; and

the Environment Agency.

2. HOW THE COUNCIL WILL DELIVER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 NFDC acknowledges and supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence (as set out below). Our policy and approach will be consistent with them, as follows:

Government's policy aim: To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically, environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.

Section 3 below sets out our plans for reducing or managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion risk in the Council's area.

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, NFDC recognises its related and important role in emergency planning and response. We will therefore:

ensure that our emergency response plans include appropriate arrangements for flooding emergencies and that such plans are reviewed, in consultation with the Environment Agency, at least every two years;

maintain an awareness of the Environment Agency's flood warning dissemination plan for our area and contribute to its implementation where relevant to our emergency response plans; and

play an agreed role in any flood warning emergency exercises organised by the Environment Agency covering our area.

Objective (b): To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

NFDC will:

provide an adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound approach to providing the flood and coastal defence service. We will:

adopt a strategic approach to 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 in Shoreline Management Plans, and Local Environment Agency Plans, for our area;

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 work is carried out in accordance with best practice and to 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 MAFF guidance, other Government publications and relevant technical manuals; (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, such as Public Private Partnerships;

where appropriate seek contributions from developers or other direct beneficiaries of works, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 25;

ensure that appropriate maintenance regimes are in place for flood and coastal defences for which the Council takes responsibility;

when specific flooding problems are identified, inform the relevant landowners of their responsibilities (see paragraph 3.1 below);

make publicly available the Council's expenditure plans for flood and coastal defence maintenance and capital works. Information is included in the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee and the relevant budget books, which are available to the public at the Town Hall, Lymington and Appletree Court, Lyndhurst. Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee are also made available at public libraries within the district and on the Council's web site.

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. In particular we will:

fulfil our responsibilities in relation to nationally and internationally important conservation areas, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as a competent authority under the terms of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 *[NB this applies equally to EA, local authorities and IDBs]*;

co-operate with English Nature and the Environment Agency in completing and implementing Coastal Habitat Management Plans (CHaMPs) covering our area, drawing on English Nature/Environment Agency guidance for plan production;

when carrying out flood and coastal defence works, seek opportunities for environmental enhancement, and aim to avoid 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 and report on them annually to the Environment Agency; and

ensure that, for those Water Level Management Plans where we are the lead operating authority, we work in partnership with English Nature to complete, implement and review Plans in accordance with MAFF guidance on plan completion and the timetables set out in MAFF High Level Targets.

Objective (c): To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

As the local planning authority for our area, NFDC will take account of flooding and coastal erosion risks in all matters relating to development control, including local plans and individual planning applications, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Notes 20 and 25.

3. 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

3.1 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 NFDC, 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.

3.2 NFDC 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 (ie measures against coastal erosion) on all frontages in the authority's area.

3.3 The flood and coastal defences that are owned or managed by the Council are detailed in our return for the database which is maintained by the Environment Agency.

3.4 The Environment Agency is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on designated main rivers and sea defences (ie measures against coastal flooding). Culverts under roads are generally the responsibility of the relevant Highways Authority (County Council or Highways Agency).

Assessment of flood risk

3.5 The whole of the district council area is drained by an extensive network of ordinary watercourses for which NFDC is the relevant operating authority. The watercourses in the Council's area that are designated as main river and thus the responsibility of the Environment Agency are shown on the Agency's Indicative Floodplain Maps, copies of which are kept on the Council's Geographic Information System. There is no internal drainage board operating in the Council's area.

3.6 We have agreed with the Environment Agency that within the Council's area there are 19.3km of "critical ordinary watercourses" (ie watercourses which are not classified as "main river" but which the Council has agreed with the Environment Agency to be critical because they have the potential to put at risk from flooding large numbers of people and property).

The watercourses concerned are listed in Appendix B.

3.7 The district council has a large geographic area covering some 290 square miles. Surface water run-off over this area drains to an extensive network of main rivers and ordinary watercourses. The ordinary watercourses range from substantial streams to minor ditches and culverts.

The ordinary watercourse network is so extensive it is impractical to carry out a risk assessment for individual ordinary watercourses.

Flooding of property occurs across the district and in many cases this is a result of blockages or lack of capacity in ordinary watercourses. Greater numbers of properties are likely to be at risk of flooding when substantial streams pass through urban areas. These streams have now been categorised as critical ordinary watercourses under the MAFF High Level Targets.

The Council has been providing an emergency response to flooding for many years and has a database of flooding incidents which includes details of property flooding dating back over 10 years. There is no record of loss of human life as a result of flooding from ordinary watercourses within the district council area.

On balance it is considered that there are minimal risks to human life created by flood risks from ordinary watercourses within the district. The only area of concern being the many fords used for road crossings throughout the area. These can be extremely dangerous if drivers try to use them when the watercourses are in full flood.

It is intended to carry out a more detailed risk assessment on the critical ordinary watercourses during 2002/03. At the same time as this assessment an investigation will be carried out into the areas known to flood where traffic could be in danger at fords and this information provided to the highway authority for consideration.

Obviously minimal risk to life from flooding from ordinary watercourses will be reduced further if the Environment Agency extend their warning service to cover critical ordinary watercourses.

Action to reduce or manage flood risks

3.8 The main means by which flood risks will be managed is through the Environment Agency's local flood warning plans for Hampshire and Dorset which became effective on 12 September 2000. These make arrangements for warnings to be provided within this Council's area, including individual warnings to high risk properties as follows:

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Flood Watch Only Areas

New Forest Catchment
River Test Catchment
Western Hampshire (04524)

Flood Warning Areas

1A2 - Lower Test Valley

1A3 - River Blackwater and River Cadnam

ID1 - Upper Lymington River (including the Weir Brockenhurst)

ID2 - Lower Lymington River

ID3 - Danes Stream

Mid Hampshire Avon - Salisbury to Ringwood (including Fordingbridge) (045241)

Lower Hampshire Avon - at Ringwood (045241)

Lower Hampshire Avon - Ringwood to Christchurch (045241)

COASTAL

Flood Warning Areas

13A - Milford-on-Sea to Calshot (including Keyhaven, Lymington & Beaulieu)

13B - Southampton Water (including Hythe, Marchwood & Totton)

New Forest DC has an Operational Flood Plan dated July 1998 and included plans for responding to major flooding in its emergency planning procedures and has arrangements for cascading warnings received from the Environment Agency to relevant Council services.

3.9 The Council has a programme in place to inspect the state of:

flood defences that it has identified (whether or not owned by the Council) on all ordinary watercourses; and

all critical ordinary watercourses that have currently been identified (excluding culverted sections).

3.10 The Council will ensure that regular maintenance is carried out on the flood defences and critical ordinary watercourses which we own, or for which we accept responsibility, so that they operate at optimum efficiency. Where the responsibility for maintenance rests with a landowner, we will aim to secure co-operation in ensuring appropriate maintenance takes place, drawing on enforcement powers if necessary.

3.11 The Council has approved a Coast protection Strategy which was adopted in 1990 and revised in 1993.

3.12 The Council will consider carrying out major coast protection and flood defence works on ordinary watercourses where schemes receive MAFF approval and qualify for grant aid. The Council has a major capital works programme which is reviewed annually.

3.13 By following Government guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 on development in flood risk areas, the Council, acting as a local planning authority, will ensure that risks are further minimised.

The Council has agreed with the Environment Agency, policies to strictly limit development in areas at risk of flooding and defined on the Local Plan Proposals Maps.

Policies for surface water drainage seek to avoid development which would cause or exacerbate damaging flooding or interfere with natural flows as advised by the Environment Agency.

Policies will also include measures to ensure the use of sustainable urban drainage systems to control surface water run off.

Within the areas at risk of flooding development proposals are subject to consultation with the Environment Agency.

Assessment of coastal erosion risks

3.14 The 1998 Western Solent and Southampton Water - and the 1999 Poole and Christchurch Bays - Shoreline Management Plans identify sites within the management of the Council. Of the 18km of shoreline owned or leased by the Council, 10km is defended against erosion. The remaining frontage consists of natural cliff and saltmarsh. The total coastal frontage within the bounds of the Council administration is 81km.

3.15 Risks of erosion of the defended frontage at Barton are high and there is an ongoing risk of local instability in the cliffs behind the rock revetment. Hurst Spit is vulnerable to severe storm conditions and is dependent upon regular maintenance to maintain its integrity. Risks of erosion of the remainder of the defended coast are moderate, and regular maintenance is required. Beach volumes are declining on virtually all beaches on an ongoing basis. Elsewhere on the undefended coast of Christchurch Bay, erosion rates average 1-3 metres per year. Saltmarsh erosion rates exceed 6m per year within parts of the Western Solent (see Shoreline Management Plans for details).

Action to reduce or manage coastal erosion risks

3.16 The Council operates a programme of routine maintenance of structures within the protected frontage of its ownership. This consists of timber groyne and revetments, seawall and rock structure maintenance. Maintenance is carried out in conjunction with beach recycling, and occasional recharge. Structures and beaches elsewhere within the district boundaries are monitored, but no maintenance is undertaken of these. Management of Hurst Spit is carried out under the 1996 Beach Management Plan, agreed with MAFF and supported with grant aid. Cliff drainage systems at Barton-on-Sea are currently maintained, but these defences need upgrading. A strategic approach to management of Christchurch Bay and the Western Solent will be developed further, with the aid of Coastal Defence Strategy plans, subject to MAFF grant aid. Future capital work programmes will be developed from these plans. The management regime takes into account the most recent predictions of the impact of climate change as set out within the Shoreline Management Plans. Warning notices are maintained in areas of public access on both cliff top and beach, on the undefended length.

3.17 The Council does not permit development in areas at risk from coastal land slips or erosion which are defined on the Local Plans Proposals maps. This is in accordance with Government advice in PPG14 on unstable land and PPG20 on coastal planning.

Within the areas at risk of coastal land slips or erosion development proposals are subject to consultation with the Council's Coastal Group.

4. PARTNERSHIPS AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 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 and other operating authorities. Our local population also has 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.

4.2 NFDC intend to review this policy statement in three years' time, 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.

MAFF high-level target 6a

New Forest District Council undertake a risk-based assessment of coastal structures and beaches as part of an extensive ongoing monitoring programme. Inspections of structures owned by the District Council are conducted at least twice per year, and also after storms. Inspection results are managed within a database system, which is analysed annually, and which is linked with an ongoing planned maintenance programme. Structures which lie outside of Council ownership are inspected annually; these structures all lie within relatively low risk areas (within the Solent).

An annual aerial survey is conducted to assess erosion rates on currently unprotected frontages. Regular topographic surveys are conducted of the beaches within the bounds of the District, on both publicly and privately owned frontages. Frontages within the Solent are surveyed twice per year and those within the more exposed Christchurch Bay are surveyed quarterly. Post-storm surveys are also conducted at vulnerable sites e.g Hurst Spit. All data is held within a GIS / database system.

High-risk areas, such as the cliffed frontage at Barton-on-Sea, are monitored monthly by land survey, for ground movements; this programme is intensified if new movement patterns emerge. Instrumentation is also used to monitor ground movements and porewater pressures. Data is stored within a spreadsheet system and is analysed monthly. A full review is conducted annually.

APPENDIX 1 - SCHEDULE OF COASTAL DEFENCES

APPROXIMATE LENGTH KM

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PROTECTED	UNPROTECTED
1)	Chewton Bunny to Barton-on-Sea (West)	Unprotected cliffs	Private	1.5
2)	Barton-on-Sea (East) to Golf Course	(i) Cliff drainage/stabilisation works (ii) Timber pile/rock revetment (iii) Five rock strongpoints and one bastion (iv) Nine short impermeable timber groynes	NFDC	1.7 -
3)	Barton-on-Sea Golf Course to Rock Cliff	Unprotected cliffs	NFDC -	3.4
4)	Rook Cliff to Sturt Pond	(i) Reinforced concrete vertical seawall (ii) Reinforced concrete stepped seawall with return wall (iii) Three bastions (iv) Thirty one impermeable timber groynes	NFDC	1.5 -
5)	Western Part of Hurst Spit	(i) Blockstone 'Rip-Rap' (ii) One terminal bastion (iii) Shingle nourishment	NFDC	0.7
6)	Eastern part of Hurst Spit (both sides)	Unprotected shingle bank	HCC/Private	- 4.8
7)	Hurst Castle	(i) Permeable timber groynes (ii) Breastwork with blockstone in-fill	DOE	0.3 -

APPROXIMATE LENGTH KM

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PROTECTED	UNPROTECTED		
8)	Keyhaven to Lymington Harbour	Basic flood protection embankments			SWA	7.0
9)	Lymington Harbour Commissioners	Reinforced concrete quay	Lymington Harbour	0.7	-	
10)	Lymington Harbour to Thorns Beach	Unprotected shore line	Private -		5.4	
11)	Thorns Beach to Great Marsh	Permeable timber groynes	Private		2.8	-
12)	Great Marsh to Lepe Country Park	Unprotected	Private	-	8.6	
13)	Lepe Country Park to Stansore Point	(i) Timber revetment (ii) Permeable timber groynes	HCC	1.4	-	
14)	Stansore Point to Allwoods Copse	Permeable timber groynes	Private	1.1	-	
15)	Allwoods Copse to Hillhead	Unprotected	Private	-	2.5	
16)	Hillhead to South of Calshot Castle	(i) Timber revetment (ii) Permeable timber groynes	NFDC	0.8	-	
17)	South of Calshot Castle to Calshot Activity Centre	(i) Timber revetment (ii) Reinforced concrete seawall (iii) Permeable timber groynes	HCC	1.3	-	
18)	Calshot Activity Centre to Fawley Refinery	Unprotected	Part HCC/Part Private	-	4.5	

TOTAL 19.3 KM 30.7 KM

Halcrow (1998) Western Solent and Southampton Water Shoreline Management Plan

Halcrow (2000) EA Solent Study Pre-Plan Review – Final Report

Jeremy Benn Associates Ltd (1999) Extreme Sea Level Analyses - Kent, Sussex and Hampshire.

SCOPAC (1999) A Critique of the Past – a Strategy for the Future.

s

References

¹ Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales MAFF and Welsh Office, September 1993

² High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Defence Operating Authorities and Elaboration of the Environment Agency's Flood Defence Supervisory Duty MAFF, November 1999

Other references from the policy statement, for example to the relevant Shoreline Management Plan.

Shoreline management plans: a guide for coastal defence authorities MAFF, 1995. A4 24pp PB2197