

Our coastline is changing... and it could affect you!

We live in a spectacular part of the country that has been shaped by natural coastal processes. The shoreline is constantly changing, sometimes gradually, sometimes dramatically, and these changes have created some of the most beautiful and important features of the coast.

Erosion and flooding are a threat to many of our coastal communities. To protect the communities, we have often had to resort to building coastal defences.

The threat of sea level rise, wetter winters and more frequent storm events will increase the pressure put on our existing coastal defences, some of which are reaching the end of their useful life. Decisions have to be made now about what can and cannot be protected in the future. We simply cannot afford to protect everywhere forever.

These important decisions are made at a local level and are referred to as a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP).

What is a Shoreline Management Plan?

In the mid 1990s, the coastal groups and local authorities of England and Wales were encouraged by Government to prepare SMPs, to provide sustainable coastal defence plans.

An SMP sets out the policy for managing our coastline and how we respond to the threat of coastal flooding and the risk of erosion. It takes account of existing defences, the natural and built environments, and adjacent coastal areas.

Isle of Wight Shoreline Management Plan

The Isle of Wight SMP is currently being reviewed, led by the Isle of Wight Council in partnership with the Environment Agency. A wide range of interest groups, businesses and organisations have fed information into the review process. The SMP covers the 168km (104 miles) of coastline, harbours, estuaries and headlands around the Island.

The new SMP will:

- Predict how our coast will be affected by erosion and sea level rise over the next 20, 50, 100 years;

- Identify risks to development and to the historic and natural environments as the coast changes;
- Produce a policy framework to manage the risks in a sustainable manner over the next 100 years.

What is the aim of the SMP review?

The SMP divides the Isle of Wight coast into a number of 'policy units', and the review will identify one of four management policies for each policy unit along the coastline:

- **No active intervention** which means no investment will be made in coastal defences (other than for safety purposes), or allowing natural change to continue.
- **Hold the line** which means maintaining the existing defences or changing the standard of protection.
- **Advance the line** which involves the building of new defences on the seaward side of existing defences and reclaiming land.

- **Managed realignment** which means allowing the shoreline to retreat or advance in a controlled or managed way, either because that is the best approach for a stretch of coast, or because the benefits of protection are clearly out of scale with financial costs.

How will the SMP review affect you?

The draft SMP, including the proposed management policies, is being published for a three month period of public examination beginning on 23 July 2010. The consultation period is open until 23 October 2010. The final SMP will then be prepared using the comments received and is due to be published in December 2010.

The SMP roadshow is your best opportunity to find out which of the four policy options is proposed for your stretch of coastline and the likely consequences. Everyone is welcome to attend the exhibition and the professionals will be available to answer your queries.

For further information and to view the consultation form, visit www.coastalwight.gov.uk/smp

The Isle of Wight Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) outlines draft proposals to manage coastal flooding and erosion risks over the next 100 years. It is available to view at the following exhibitions:

Northwood House, Cowes	Monday 13 September	2pm to 7pm
Ryde Castle Hotel	Tuesday 14 September	2pm to 7pm
Wootton Bridge Community Centre	Wednesday 15 September	2pm to 7pm
Yarmouth Institute	Thursday 16 September	2pm to 7pm
Sandown Library	Friday 17 September	2pm to 7pm

During summer 2010 the draft SMP can be viewed at www.coastalwight.gov.uk/smp and at:

Lord Louis Library (reference library), Newport
Coastal Visitors' Centre, Dudley Road, Ventnor – by appointment Tel: (01983) 857228.

The consultation period is open from 23 July to 23 October 2010.

Led by the Isle of Wight Council with the Environment Agency, Royal Haskoning and a Steering Group of key stakeholders.

