

What is a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)?

An SMP is a policy document for coastal defence management. It takes account of other existing planning initiatives and legislative requirements and is intended to inform wider strategic planning. It does not set policies for the management of issues such as development or land drainage, though all land use, especially in the future, should consider the SMP.

The main objective of an SMP is to identify sustainable long-term management policies for the coast. It is likely that the plan will recommend changes to the current approach in some areas, however, it will help manage these so that the people, places, industry and wildlife affected can adapt at a reasonable pace. This approach avoids tying future generations into inflexible and expensive options for defence.

The shoreline management policies that will be considered are those defined by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), which are:

Hold the Line: Maintain the existing defence;

Advance the line: Build new defences seaward of the existing defence line;

Managed realignment: Allow the shoreline to change with management to control or limit movement; and

No active intervention: A decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences.

The Study Area

The coastline in South Wales varies considerably along its length in its formation and the rate of loss and build-up that occurs due to natural processes, such as current, wind, tides and waves. The character of the South Wales coast is variable in elevation with cliffs, intertidal mudflats, extensive saltmarsh and sand dune habitats, wide sandy beaches and spectacular views.

Historically the region's coastal areas – its ports and fisheries, major resort towns and clusters of industry have been instrumental in driving its economy and today the region maintains a thriving maritime economy. The wide variety of habitats leads to a diverse range of human usage including recreational, industrial and residential. Over 80% of South Wales coastal habitats are designated as nationally and internationally important environment sites

How will the Plan be developed?

The plan will be developed in line with latest Government (DEFRA supported by Welsh Assembly Government) guidance, which can be found in full at www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/guidance/smp.htm

It will have two main influences: technical assessment and democratic input, and will be developed in phases. The plan will be procured by Carmarthenshire County Council, as Lead Authority for the Swansea & Carmarthen Bay Coastal Engineering Group. The Group comprises:

Members: Bridgend County Borough Council, Carmarthenshire County Council, City & County of Swansea, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency, Neath Port Talbot County Council, Pembrokeshire County Council, Qinetiq, Vale of Glamorgan Council

Associate Members: Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust, National Trust, Welsh Assembly Government

All decisions made by the Group will be reviewed by Elected Members (local councillors) and the Environment Agency's Regional Flood Defence Committee. This will make sure the decisions are being properly represented. To make sure that the plan is properly informed about local issues and interests, stakeholder groups will also be set up.

The SMP review process will take two to three years to complete, with the first draft expected in 2010 when there will be a full public consultation exercise.

How can I get involved?

If you would like to participate in the consultation for the preparation of the revised Shoreline Management Plan for the South Wales coast between St. Annes Head and Lavernock Point, please contact:

Swansea & Carmarthen Bay Coastal Engineering Group, c/o Phil Williams, Chairman of the Group, Waste Management & Coast Protection, Carmarthenshire County Council, Stephen's Way, PENSARN, Carmarthen SA31 2BG

Further information: The three first round SMPs developed for this section of the South Wales coastline can be viewed online at: www.southwalescoast.org Throughout the review process, review documents will also be available to view and download from this website.

Swansea & Carmarthen Bay Shoreline Management Plan

Initial Consultation

2009



www.southwalescoast.org

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Introduction

A Shoreline Management Plan is now being developed for the coastline from St. Anne's Head in Pembrokeshire to Lavernock Point in Vale of Glamorgan. (This is a combination of SMP1 Plans for Sub-cell 8b & 8c). The plan is led by Local Authorities and will ensure that future defence works along the entire stretch are managed in relation to their impact on one another. Further details can be found in this leaflet, including how members of the public can get involved in the process.



The Changing Coastline

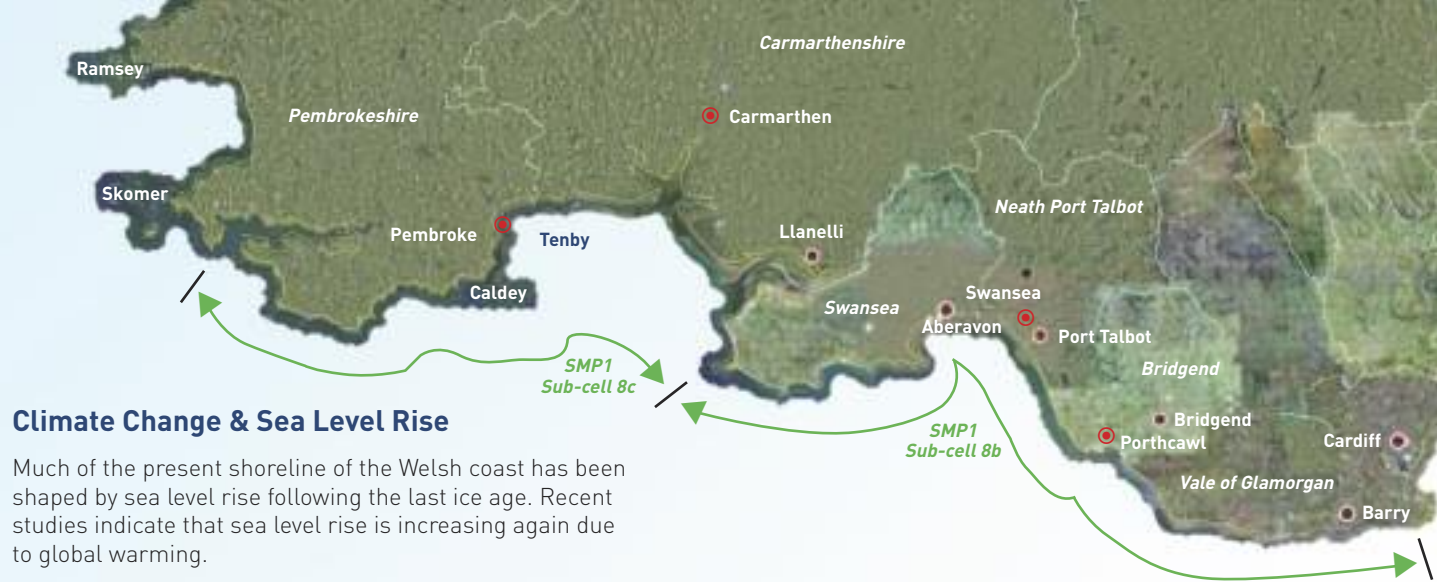
The coastline is constantly changing. Waves and tides naturally erode some areas of the coastline and deposit the eroded material at others. The amount of physical change depends on the tidal regime, the degree of exposure to storms, the underlying geology and the structures present. Coastal changes usually take place over

many years and this can be seen where parts of villages have been lost through erosion or where former coastal settlements are now landlocked because of sediment accretion (or build-up).

Building of coastal defences to control flooding and erosion have also had an influence on the evolution of our coastline. In the past these defences may have taken place without an appreciation of the effect they have on other locations up and down the coast.



Whilst these changes continue, social, economic and environmental pressures are increasing in coastal areas. People enjoy living by and visiting the coast so there is always pressure for more housing. As international trade increases so does the demand for port space and associated coastal-based industry. Such development places stress on natural coastal habitats that are often unique and of national and international importance.



Climate Change & Sea Level Rise

Much of the present shoreline of the Welsh coast has been shaped by sea level rise following the last ice age. Recent studies indicate that sea level rise is increasing again due to global warming.

Climate change due to global warming may result in significant changes to the coast, such as:

- Greater frequency of storms;
- Increasing wave heights;
- Increased erosion;
- Fluctuating rainfall; and
- Increasing river flows.

What does this all mean?

Even if the defences are continually improved where they are now, it is likely that the beaches and coastal environments in front of them will be changed by the effect of the sea. This means we need a long-term plan to co-ordinate how our coast is managed. This Shoreline Management Plan, or SMP, will identify how our coastline can be best managed over the next 100 years in order to prevent the loss of beaches or other coastal environments, i.e. intertidal habitats, and to best protect coastal communities.

Coastal Defence Planning

There are three tiers of coastal defence planning in Wales, each with different roles in the risk management process:

A *Shoreline Management Plan* (SMP) identifies general policies and general implementation requirements; Strategy identifies the nature and timing of works to be undertaken; and Scheme identifies the design and construction of major works to be carried out.

The SMP forms the highest tier in this process and sets the long-term direction for managing risk. The first generation of SMPs, completed for the entire coastline of England and Wales, was a large scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal erosion and flooding. There were three plans covering the coastline defined here. They presented a long-term policy framework for coastal management. Some local strategic plans and studies have been carried out following the production of these SMP's and where appropriate these have led to investment in projects.

The SMPs are now due for review to ensure that they are updated to take account of the latest knowledge and information and a greater understanding of the risks we face in the future.



The Swansea and Carmarthen Bay Coastal Engineering Group is procuring the services of an experienced consultant to review the first SMP and produce an updated SMP. The second generation SMPs will identify sustainable and deliverable solutions to manage the risks while working with natural processes wherever possible.