

Report to standing conference on problems associated with the coastline

Date: 27 September 2009

Report of the Chairman of the Southern Coastal Group

3.1 NATIONAL NETWORK OF STRATEGIC REGIONAL COASTAL MONITORING PROGRAMMES (2011-2017)

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report is to inform Elected Members on proposals for the development of the Southeast Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme into the National Network of Regional Monitoring Programmes. This programme is a high profile regional partnership initiative, which is being lead by New Forest District Council on behalf of the Coastal Group (through the Channel Coastal Observatory).

The existing DEFRA grant aid funded Southeast Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme has been in operation since the financial year 2002/03. Funding continues until March 2012.

3.1.2 BACKGROUND

Coastal risk management is now conducted over broad areas, controlled by coastal processes rather than simple administrative boundaries. This necessitates partnership working by adjoining local authorities.

Coastal risk management requires high quality and long term data sets to inform effective decision making in a complex environment.

The current approach to coastal monitoring throughout England is now well organised and structured nationally, both within individual Coastal Groups and on a regional basis. The current series of regional monitoring programmes, managed through a series of lead authorities on behalf of the Coastal Groups, provides a regionally co-ordinated and integrated approach to coastal monitoring, to maximise use of data and to provide best value.

The existing Southeast Strategic Regional Monitoring Programme has been promoted developed and implemented through NFDC.

A regional centre of excellence has been developed, through the formation of the Channel Coastal Observatory in 2002. The specialist team provides regional technical support for the programme, under the technical direction of Andrew Bradbury, and is based at the National Oceanography Centre Southampton. The team trains and provides a sustainable supply of specialist scientific and engineering staff that is able to service the requirements of all programme partners.

The Southeast Strategic Regional Monitoring Programme is recognised as an example of international best practice by maritime coastal authorities, consultants and the Environment Agency.

Although there is considerable voluntary cooperation between regions, there is some scope for improved consistency of approach on a national basis and also a need to achieve a number of national objectives. It is recognised that the regional approach to delivery provides the most suitable scale for delivery, since this enables adequate local engagement and also links at an appropriate scale with key strategic regional initiatives such as shoreline management plans. The current structure provides both robust governance through the standing order procedures of the lead organisations and delivery at an appropriate scale to optimise both procurement requirements and local coordination.

Following discussions, between representatives of the Coastal Groups and the Environment Agency, the need for an integrated regional approach to coastal monitoring has been identified. This is to be developed by combining the existing regional monitoring programmes into a national network of strategic regional monitoring programmes. NFDC have been asked to lead this development through the national monitoring review group, based on their specialist experience.

3.1.3 NATIONAL PROGRAMME AIMS AND STRUCTURE

The national network of strategic regional coastal monitoring programmes aims are:

- Drive efficiency in flood and coastal erosion risk management through a robust evidence based approach to decision making.
- Develop a National network of regional coastal monitoring programmes
- Develop nationally consistent guidance on the specification, management and delivery of coastal data and the development of monitoring programmes.
- Develop an integrated national network of regional coastal monitoring programmes that
 - use a consistent, repeatable, risk based and cost effective methods of monitoring the coastal environment.
 - optimise available funding to deliver both strategic and operational requirements
 - provide a sound evidence base for shoreline management plans, strategies and schemes to optimise beach management investment decisions
 - provide integration of regional data sets to inform national initiatives

- develop collaboration between operating authorities and a sustainable skills base at local, regional and national scales.
- Establish a clear economic assessment of the benefits of monitoring and performance review criteria for future assessment of benefits
- Produce nationally consistent performance review criteria for assessment of monitoring programme benefits

The programme has a complex structure and will integrate the existing regional monitoring programmes for:

- The Southeast
- The Southwest
- The North East
- The North West
- Anglian
- East Riding of Yorkshire

All partner monitoring programmes have made the necessary commitment to the national programme

Programme management will require the specialist services of the Channel Coastal Observatory, together with additional resources to manage the national programme.

All costs associated with programme delivery will be provided through dedicated programme budgets and 100% grant aid.

3.1.4 NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ROLE

NFDC will lead on programme development and implementation of the national network with input from the partner authorities.

The regional centre of excellence (Channel Coastal Observatory) hosted by NFDC will continue to operate in its present form but will “expand” to store and disseminate monitoring data from the regional programmes within the national network.

NFDC will continue to act as the lead authority for the southeast region, with continued input from the partner authorities of Worthing, Canterbury and the Environment Agency. With regard to the funding regime there will be a revision to budget management, in that NFDC will receive funding for the whole of the southeast programme (previously funding was made directly available to the other partner authorities) In essence NFDC will act as a “clearing house” to distribute funding to the other partner authorities.

3.1.5 APPLICATIONS AND APPROVALS

Each of the operating authorities within the region has signed a letter of agreement to the programme components. They have also provided their agreement that New Forest District Council will continue to act as the lead authority for the purposes of administration of the project. There are no financial implications for the partners, as the whole of the project is expected to be funded through EA administered DEFRA grant aid. SCOPAC has also endorsed the proposal.

Before the national programme can proceed it must be approved by the Environment Agency, through the Coast Protection Act of 1949.

A Strategy Appraisal Report has been prepared by NFDC (on behalf of the lead partners for the regional monitoring programmes) for submission to the Environment Agency's National Review Group. The application was reviewed in May 2010 and this has now been approved by the Environment Agency's National Review Group.

Financial approvals are now ongoing within the EA administration and these are expected shortly.

Once programme approval is received there will be a requirement to complete the programme in accordance with the application.

3.1.6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Channel Coastal Observatory will continue in its current form as established for the southeast regional monitoring programme. Operational costs will continue to be 100% funded through the national programme, in accordance with grant memoranda.

3.1.7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The programme will be funded by grant aid administered by the Environment Agency, via the normal capital coast protection scheme funding process, for the period of the application of five years.

The programme will be 100% funded through the Coast Protection Act grant rate system based on grant memorandum criteria. i.e. there will be no additional cost to the partners

The current estimated cost of the national monitoring programme is between £30m and £33m (allowing for contingency) over the initial 5 years of the programme.

The financial responsibility for NFDC (for the southeast component) will be for £10m expenditure, this will allow for the delivery of the southeast programme along with management and co-ordination of the national programme.

The economic analysis demonstrates that the national programme has the potential for large-scale, region wide, actual and efficiency savings to the taxpayer, these are likely to exceed £200m during the first five years.

NFDC Elected Members have approved in principle that NFDC continue to act as the lead authority in the application to the Environment Agency for funding of the national network of regional monitoring programmes.

Recommendation: For information

3.2 Assessment of Coastal Erosion and Landsliding for the Funding of Coastal Risk Management Projects – Guidance notes Paper D

A recent project, promoted by the EA, has sought to clarify funding issues which have historically resulted in failure of a number of Southern Coastal Group / SCOPAC members to receive grant aid funding associated with cliff instability. The Chairman of the Southern Coastal Group has been a member of the project steering group. The project has now reached a stage where preliminary guidance notes have been issued and these provide a much more optimistic outlook on funding possibilities.

The purpose of the notes is to provide guidance on the assessment of coastal erosion, cliff instability and coastal landslides in England and Wales for the funding of coastal erosion risk management projects, particularly with respect to applications for grant in aid under the Coast Protection Act 1949. The notes are essentially an outline and clarification of existing guidance from Defra and the EA. The Coast Protection Act 1949 has proved to be the most widely used and practical Instrument to undertake investigations and to carry out coast protection and stabilisation works in the national interest.

In all cliff systems there are many interrelated factors which contribute to coastal instability and erosion in addition to the action of the sea. In the past, there has been debate about how funding for protection works involving coastal landslides should be addressed. In previous assessments for grant in aid funding under the Act, it has been recognised that coastal retreat is often due to a combination of different processes in addition to erosion by direct wave action, and that these influences may be impossible to separate. Thus many of the major protection schemes which have received grant in aid funding nationally over the last 20 years have included components of slope strengthening and drainage in addition to toe protection against wave action.

Whilst many schemes receiving grant in aid have included provision of drainage, for example to lower groundwater levels to assist in landslide stabilisation, other projects have been unsuccessful in securing grant where it has been deemed that drainage issues are unrelated to the normal processes of coastal cliff recession.

The new guidance recognises that coastal erosion risk does not necessarily stop once the toe of the cliff is protected from wave action by, for example, a seawall, and several grant in aided schemes have involved works to stabilise cliffs behind established seawalls. This has acknowledged the fact that unless these works are undertaken, risks may be posed to the coastal defence structure from landsliding occurring behind the defence itself. Grant in aid has also been given historically under the Act to assist with studies and investigations of coastal erosion risk problems. In addition to receiving grant in aid funding from central government, coast protection projects have often been supported with funds from other sources, including contributions from local authorities and from organisations benefiting from the work,.

The new preliminary guidance provides clarification of procedures required to assist with eligibility of grant aid and it would appear that many sites that have failed funding tests may be eligible for funding, when the new guidance is applied. This remains to be tested but is a very positive move in a funding area that has lacked clarity and consistency for many years. New Forest District Council plans to test the guidance during the next few months for the site at Barton-on-Sea.

Recommendation: For information

3.3 Field visits and training events

3.3.1 Hengistbury head field visit

The SCOPAC field trip to Hengistbury Head on the 15th June was deemed a success by the 11 elected members and 23 officers who attended. Attendees met in the Hiker Café mid-morning before setting out in the field for the site visit.



Thank you to Steve Woolard (CBC), Neil Watson (EA), Steve Wallis (DCC), Helen Powell (Natural England) for their interesting talks which covered the history of the site, Poole Bay geomorphology and defences, potential

breaching of Double Dykes, archaeology, nature conservation, the influence of the Long Groyne, Regional Monitoring, management of Mudeford Spit and flooding issues. A special thank you goes to Dr David Harlow, for his informative talks and to his team for organising car parking permits. The excellent organisation by Dr Sam Cope made the event run very smoothly.

Following the success of the field visit to Hengistbury Head preliminary plans are underway to develop a visit to Portsmouth in 2011. The focus of this visit will be on provision of defences in an urban area of high flood risk and where there are also significant planning implications. The proposed visit will follow a similar format including a walking tour and opportunities to view a range of sites. It is suggested that the field visit will be held at a similar time of year. It is suggested that the meeting commence with a short update on business issues, since this event lies between the two SCOAPAC meetings that are 6 months apart. A budget of £900 is suggested for this event, which will include a visit to the Spinnaker Tower and allow for the attendance of up to 35 people.

3.3.2 Training workshop

The introduction of the new technical training programme for officers, to assist with technical development of inexperienced staff has also been extremely successful. The first workshop in the “problem shared” series was particularly encouraging as many new faces attended. The event was very successful in attracting the target audience, of those that have just embarked on a career in shoreline management. This was balanced by attendance by a number of very experienced officers that were able to share their knowledge. Presentations by Dr Dave Harlow (Bournemouth BC) and Pete Ferguson and Andy Bradbury (New Forest DC) were well received. The outputs from the workshops have been summarised and will be published on the SCOPAC website, as the website is updated. Feedback from officers has also been very positive about the practical approach to the workshop.

Particular thanks are due to Samantha Cope for organisation of the event.

The next workshop in the series is planned for early January and is likely to cover aspects of management of either rock groynes or beach recycling. This event will once again be hosted by the Channel Coastal Observatory and be held at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton. Once again there will be no cost for the use of the venue.

3.3.3 Beach management manual

The CIRIA beach management manual has now been completed and a series of launch events are planned for the autumn. SCOPAC undertook to host one of these events and this has been organised. The cost for hosting this event is likely to be about £400, to cover the cost of light refreshments for up to 100 participants. The venue will be provided at no cost by the Channel Coastal Observatory.

3.3.4 Induction training for members

Following the request by some members for a more formal approach to member induction to SCOPAC, a short training event is planned to follow the next meeting of SCOPAC, subject to demand from members. This will be held on 3 December. Both new and more experienced members would be welcome to attend. It has been suggested that the invitation should be extended more broadly to each member authority to invite other elected members that are not currently SCOPAC representatives, but who have an interest in coastal matters; these might typically include members with coastal wards or those with portfolios relevant to coastal issues. Procedures to identify changes in member representation have recently been introduced to the secretariat to assist with planning of future induction events.

3.3.5 SCOPAC meeting participation by members

A presentation is due to be received by Cllr Jenny Wride at this meeting. Volunteers are now sought to continue the series of member issues presentations, which have been successfully introduced into the SCOPAC agenda. Presentations can be on any subject of concern to elected members related to coastal management.

Recommendation: For decision

To approve the proposal for development of new officer and member training initiatives including funding of £400 for the CIRIA beach management manual launch and £900 for the field visit to Portsmouth.

3.4 SCOPAC non technical guide

There is currently a stock of about 450 copies of the SCOPAC Non technical Guide which are being held at the Coastal Centre on the Isle of Wight. These are based on current practice and have a limited shelf life, due to changes in procedures and legislation.

Options for future distribution have been suggested by Robin McInnes

- approach the ICE bookshop to see if they would be interested in selling them on our behalf at £17. (SCOPAC would receive about £10/copy)
- Robin McInnes has suggested that he would be happy to sell them on the same basis for SCOPAC on his website (SCOPAC would receive about £10/copy) www.coastalandgeotechnicalservices.com.
- Sell the guides via Havant Borough Council, via the SCOPAC website on the same basis.

It is also suggested that we could also distribute to coastal MPs in England (186) and any new members that have not yet received a copy. The cost of

distribution to the MPs is estimated at £350. Unless we move quickly they will be out of date and redundant. An insert note prepared by the Chairman of the Southern Coastal Groups could be included highlighting the two recent government policy documents from Defra and CLG on Coastal Change Policy. The National Chairman of the Coastal Group Chairs has been investigating the possibility of this being funded nationally, but has not been able to find a suitable funding route. Although it could be argued that SCOPAC would supporting what should really be a national initiative, there is clear benefit to the SCOPAC membership in raising the profile of coastal issues at a time when decision makers need to be in possession of the facts relating to coastal risks.

Recommendation: For decision

To approve the proposal for distribution of SCOPAC non technical guides to coastal MPs at an estimated cost of £350.

To approve the proposal for potential sale of the remaining stock of SCOPAC non technical guides.

3.5 Annual report Paper E

It is intended to have prepared a full suite of annual reports (nationally) on Coastal Group activities in time for the next Coastal Forum on 6th October. Last year guidelines were drawn up as to what might go into an annual report together with a rough structure. The following suggestions are developed from the Coastal Policy team input.

This year the new Coalition Government has set some clear agendas around 'localism' and dramatically cutting expenditure, so we need to make a special effort to ensure the annual reports

- showcase the work of Coastal Groups;
- demonstrate value for money;
- clearly show how the work of Coastal Groups contributes to local empowerment and accountability in a Flood and Coastal Risk Management context.

This would be done best by making the annual report much more punchy, quickly and clearly highlighting the headline successes and progress in three or four pages and leaving the 'business' items and more detailed sections in discrete appendices.

Beyond that, sections can be tailored to local circumstances, trying to embed how the Coastal Group facilitates 'localism' throughout, for example how you -

- develop new evidence using local expertise;

- share knowledge between organisations and the public locally, raising awareness and understanding so that local people can engage in discussions in a more informed way;
- provide a forum for local issues to be presented to national government bodies (and vice versa);
- actively involve local communities in coastal management through SMP and Strategy development.

This is a real opportunity to demonstrate to member organisations what extremely good value membership of SCOPAC provides.

A template document has been provided by the Environment Agency's National Coastal Policy Team (Paper F). It is the intention that the draft report will be completed by early October.

Report for information

3.6 SMP progress Paper F

3.6.1 North Solent

The North Solent SMP is now with Quality review group (QRG) for their second review. The QRG comments deadline for this review was 26th Aug and we are likely to receive their collated responses in September.

Briefing papers have been provided to the 10 Local Authorities and the Southern RFDC to aid them in preparing reports for Cabinets/Executives/etc for adoption/endorsement of the final plan. For the majority of the Client Steering Group member organisations, the process of adoption/endorsement will begin in Sept and conclude in late October or during November. This means the final plan will be submitted to EA for final approval sign off in late November or beginning of December.

The Appendix 20 IROPI form is being prepared and is planned on being submitted once QRG have completed their review and accepted the AA. All SMP documents and appendices files will be made available via the SMP website and hard copies and a summary booklet will be produced following QRG reviews.

3.6.2 Poole and Christchurch Bays

The Poole and Christchurch Bay SMP covers the Coastline from Hurst Spit in Hampshire to Durlleston Head in Dorset. At their meeting on 12th July 2010 the Wessex Regional Flood Defence Committee resolved to adopt the SMP.

Full details of the SMP can be found on the [2 Bays SMP website](#). The SMP is divided into "Policy Development Zones" (PDZ) and the part within Southern Region is within PDZ1. The SMP has now been adopted by Bournemouth City Council and the adopted of PDZ1 is available on the [following link](#).

Briefing papers have been provided to the Local Authorities to aid them in preparing reports for Cabinets/Executives/etc for adoption/endorsement of the final plan. For the majority of the Client Steering Group member organisations, the process of adoption/endorsement will begin in Sept and conclude in late October or during November. This means the final plan will be submitted to EA for final approval sign off in late November or beginning of December.

3.6.3 Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight plan has recently reached the consultation stage of the draft SMP. Adoption of the plan is scheduled for 26th November. Details of the consultation process are attached as paper F. Details of the plan are available via the project website www.coastalwight.gov.uk/smp

3.6.3 SMP Action plans

The SMPs within the SCOPAC region each have an associated action plan. Delivery of the action plans is coordinated via the coastal group (Southern Coastal Group), through the medium term programme financial planning process. A number of actions within the plans are common to each of the SMPS within the coastal group region and there is likely to be considerable regional benefit in joint delivery of some of these outputs.

Several of the SMP actions are linked with current SCOPAC research aspirations and the SMP action plans delivery process should provide the opportunity for delivery of these programmes. Appropriate cost estimates have been made and these programmes placed within the medium term programme. New Forest District Council has been identified as the lead partner within the MTP for the purposes of coordination of these region wide programmes that will benefit all members of the Southern Coastal Group.

Report for information

3.7 WEBSITE

It was reported at the Southern Coastal Group meeting in July that the IOW Council had indicated that it would be unable to continue the management of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC websites given lack of resources. The Group was advised that while the Channel Coast Observatory could maintain the websites in the interim, the Chairperson of the SCOPAC Research sub-group will prepare an options paper for the next meeting detailing cost, procurement and delivery options. Officers were also invited to forward on any ideas to the Chairman for consideration. Members are also invited to comment on potential content of the websites.

Following initial review of the website it is apparent that the site could usefully use a makeover to bring it up to date, although significant expenditure on development of a new site is not suggested. It is clear in particular that the sites can be improved to present the new training initiatives and outcomes of research programmes in a more structured manner.

It is suggested that the budget for maintenance and improvement of the two websites should not be increased and that an annual sum of £1500 continue to be allocated to the management and maintenance of each of the websites.

Recommendation: For information

3.8 National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping development Paper G

Following the political changes in Westminster in May, the project is now on hold whilst reviews of preferred delivery are considered.

Recommendation: For information

3.9 Upcoming events

CIRIA, Beach management manual launch, National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, 15 October

CIRIA, Beach management manual launch, London

SCOPAC meeting 3 December AM

SCOPAC members induction workshop, 3 December PM, Havant (subject to demand)

Southern Coastal Group training workshop – Recent practice with Rock Groynes, National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, 5 January

Report by Professor Andrew Bradbury, Chairman of Southern Coastal Group