

NORTH EAST HAYLING RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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North Solent Draft Shoreline Management Plan

We have examined the above draft plan which was released for public consultation on 1st February. Of particular interest to us are the detailed plans for Sectors H101, H102 and H103 and we comment on the plan as it relates to these sectors.

Whatever the finally adopted plan, in order to be acceptable to this Association, it must resolve two flooding related problems which affect our residents: surface water flooding arising from insufficient capacity for drainage/storage and sea water tidal flooding. This flooding affects low lying houses in the village, the pumping station at Copse Lane and access to the village both for residents and emergency vehicles *via* the sole road from north and south

Sector H101 Langstone Bridge to Northney Farm

At the most northerly point of Chichester Harbour, the defences here are less subject to storm damage and overtopping but, nevertheless, Northney Road is subject to sea water flooding at very high tide, especially when this occurs at a period of low atmospheric pressure. Access is then cut off and some properties have been flooded in the past. Rainwater also can bring its own problems here, when excessive rainfall backs up behind the wall and the tidal flaps are closed for long periods.

The "hold the line" conclusion for this sector is welcomed (although the cost of so doing will apparently fall on landowners). However, if the projected increases in sea level are correct, then comparable increases in height will be necessary to hold the line. Thus the policy would only be acceptable to this Association if, in addition to permitting maintenance and repairs, an increase in height of the sea wall is also allowed. We would not want works to be delayed by the need to seek planning consent for wall raising; this would necessitate expensive environmental surveys *etc* which would be unrealistic for landowners to fund. Examination of any necessary environmental issues associated with the raising of the wall should happen sooner rather than later and, if at all possible, be funded by the operating authorities within the current SMP round

The sea wall along the road from the Hotel to the bridge also serves as a footpath and bridle path for this rather hazardous highway, the traffic along which constantly wears away the 'wall'. Any maintenance and repair must take this into consideration and the Local Authority and Government aim to provide a footpath around the Island could be an important consideration here.

Sector 102 Northney Farm to Chichester Road

The Draft SMP summary for this stretch of coastline states that the maintenance of the defences will become technically unsustainable in the medium to long term due to increasing flood risk. Dependant upon the actual increase in sea level, sustaining the defences might well become financially difficult for the owners but surely any work would remain technically feasible. The summary also states that the existing defences are “maintained by private individuals and the Environment Agency”. To our knowledge, the Agency has carried out very little work, if any, in the past few years and there is no organised maintenance of the tidal flaps, which are crucial to the delicate balance of sea and surface water control.

This sector is the most important for resolution of the village problems mentioned in the first paragraph. The consequences of failure or overtopping of the sea wall in this sector have been only too familiar in the past. Sea water flows southwards towards Chichester Road/Gutner Lane approximately one and a half to two hours after the high tide, flooding one property many times and the roads in this area. Sea water has also reached the eastern end of Clovelly Road. Selection in the draft SMP of a severely retreated managed alignment option is therefore both unexpected (as the previous SMP recommended holding the line) and extremely disappointing.

Furthermore, selection of this option appears to have been made solely from the aspect of sea water. It shows insufficient consideration of the importance of the surface water storage provided by this area, including its maintained ditches. Heavy rainfall over several days produces results similar to sea water flooding, essentially by a reverse process as flooding starts within the low lying ditches in the village which cannot drain away quickly enough at certain tides and when ditch maintenance has been neglected; the process is aggravated when the reservoir area is saturated.. This results in flooding in Church Lane, Gutner Lane and the Copse Lane junction. See next section – Sector H103.

In order to make clear how the majority of the surface water from large areas of farmland, roadways and ditches is discharged through this section of sea wall, the Association has prepared a plan showing the areas involved plus the flow of all ditches and their paths to the tidal flaps in the eastern sea wall. The plan is attached and could be used in conjunction with appropriate hydrological calculations to derive the volumes of rainwater which would require storage in various extreme rainfall scenarios. We believe that these volumes should be estimated as soon as possible and compared with calculations to establish the area of ground required to store these volumes. It should be noted that a limited amount of land with the necessary seaward fall is available: beyond a certain contour line the land begins to fall again toward the village.

During recent discussions with Havant Borough, it had been suggested that, if managed realignment were to be proposed, it would only extend to the area currently designated as SSSI. However, in the draft SMP, the proposed area for managed retreat shown on your map has been move westwards, approximately to the line of the extent of the most recent sea flooding, *ie* the 3.2 m contour.. This is much closer to the highest contour line in the area, ideal for sea defence but leaving no space for the rainwater reservoir. Furthermore, the Marshes are a vital factor for the viability of Northney Farm. They provide pasture for beef cattle (part of the Three Harbours Beef Scheme) and also for young heifers and dry cows which need separate pasture before calving. If managed retreat does occur, then other areas of arable land (noted as grade 1 and 2) will have to be put down to pasture, which will affect the arable viability of the farm.

The owners of the farm and the other harbourside landowners are adamant that they wish to maintain the *status quo*. The Association supports this view and believes that the policy should be “hold the line” at least for the first epoch. Any change to sea level should become clearer in that

time and the issue of surface water storage could be resolved so that an agreed scheme can be implemented for the subsequent epochs.

Sector 103 Chichester Road to Mengham

Although only a small part of this sector falls within the NEHRA area, events in Sector H102 have considerable impact on this section. Sea water flows toward Chichester Road and the Gutner Lane/Copse Lane junction sometime after overtopping of the eastern wall. The road becomes blocked and the Southern Water pumping station becomes flooded. Rainwater produces a similar situation, the combination of land drainage from the western fields and the natural slope of the roads means that surface water collects at this low point.

There is some room for improvement to the flow of ditches and links between ditches in this area. The detailed ditch flow plan submitted by Mr D. Bowerman shows the existing layout.

The designation of holding the line is again welcomed but with the same reservations expressed for Sector H101. It is important to realise that properties here are seriously affected by failure or lack of maintenance of defences in Sector H102.

We trust that you will give our views careful consideration. We remain willing to engage in constructive dialogue with Havant Borough Council and the Environment Agency as the Shoreline Management Plan for this area continues to be developed.

Yours sincerely,

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