

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

10 OCTOBER 2013

SUBJECT:	APPROVAL OF WIRRAL COASTAL STRATEGY
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL COASTAL WARDS
REPORT OF:	KEVIN ADDERLEY, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR BRIAN KENNY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the actions and management plan developed as part of the Wirral Coastal Strategy.
- 1.2 The Coastal Strategy identifies a timescale for intervention to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk. Four priority areas have been identified where intervention has been identified as being required in the next 20 years. However for these works to be implemented, external contributions in addition to grant-in-aid from the Environment Agency (EA), will need to be found. This report looks to instruct the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment to explore opportunities to provide funding outside the EA grant-in-aid system so that risk to coastal communities and assets can be reduced.
- 1.3 The Coastal Strategy is not a statutory document, however the Council is exercising its powers as a Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authority in undertaking its production.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In order to manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion, strategies for managing the coast are developed within a hierarchical framework. The strategic hierarchy comprises Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs), followed by Strategy Plans and finally detailed scheme appraisal. Each of these approaches becomes progressively more detailed and site specific, leading ultimately, provided sufficient funds are available, to the implementation of a management scheme that is considered appropriate for a specific length of coastline.

The policies contained within the current North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2), were adopted by Cabinet in September 2010. Whilst the SMP identifies what policy should be adopted for future Coastal Defence management, the Wirral Coastal Strategy identifies how and when the policies would most appropriately be implemented. The Executive Summary to the Wirral Coastal Strategy is annexed as **Appendix 1**. The full Strategy document and Appendices can be found at the following link:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/council-and-democracy/have-your-say/consultations/closed-consultations/coastal-strategy-phase-2>.

- 2.2 The strategy work undertaken is subject to 100% grant-in-aid funding administered by, and in accordance to guidance published by, the EA.

2.3 Stage 1 of strategy production involved a review of all existing information and a public consultation exercise was undertaken to promote the development of the strategy and to gather views about options for management actions. Over one hundred questionnaires were received, the outputs from which were used to develop the objectives for the coastal strategy. Key Stakeholders such as major landowners and other organisations with a responsibility for the coast were contacted separately, and again their views were used to help develop the strategy objectives.

2.4 The Strategy considers future flood and coastal erosion risks, over a 100-year timeframe, with actions generally considered within the three epochs:

- Short Term: The next 20 years
- Medium Term: 20-50 years from the present
- Long Term: 50-100 years from the present

2.5 The principal aims of the Strategy are:

- To confirm the level of predicted coastal erosion and tidal flood risk facing the Wirral coastline over the next 100 years, utilising the most recent climate change guidance.
- To consider a range of coastal management options from which a preferred coastal strategy is recommended. This takes account of environmental assessments, economic viability and identification of funding sources, including potential private sector involvement / contributions.
- To produce a Strategy Implementation Plan that meets the social / recreational, economic and environmental needs of the Wirral frontage.

2.6 Finally, the Strategy identifies a preferred option or management arrangement for each distinct length of coast, the scope of which may vary over time as risks change, and a preliminary assessment of the amount of funding that particular measures could receive from the public purse and the additional funding that would be required from elsewhere.

3.0 WIRRAL COASTAL STRATEGY

3.1 The Strategy covers the entire Wirral coastline, which is split into three primary frontages, consistent with natural process behaviour and environmental interests:

- Strategy Frontage West – the River Dee shoreline, from the Borough boundary at Gayton to Red Rocks at Hoylake;
- Strategy Frontage North – the North Wirral shoreline, from the Red Rocks at Hoylake to Fort Perch Rock at New Brighton; and
- Strategy Frontage East – the River Mersey shoreline, from Fort Perch Rock at New Brighton to the Borough boundary at Eastham.

3.2 Flood and Coastal Erosion risk for each of the three strategy frontages has been defined by using outputs from the following studies:

- Wirral Flood Risk Hazard Mapping (EA)
- Wirral Areas Benefiting from Defences Study (EA)
- Coastal Erosion Mapping (EA)
- Wirral's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

- Wirral's Coastal Monitoring programme.
- Cell 11 (Liverpool Bay, North Western and Tidal Dee Coastal Groups) Joint Probability Study.
- Data relating to the physical and coastal environment and local and regional predictions of sea level rise and other effects of climate change.

3.3 Following the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Assessment, an Economic Assessment was undertaken to calculate the value of damages and losses that could be caused to residential and commercial property and asset infrastructure if no coastal defence management actions are undertaken. By assessing the economic consequence of implementing a series of coastal defence management actions a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) for each length of coastline is determined. Understanding the BCR for each management option leads to the discounting of non-viable options, and assists, in association with environmental assessment, the selection of the preferred option.

3.4 The three principal frontages described in Paragraph 3.1 above have been further subdivided into 14 "Strategy Units" which reflect existing defended and undefended areas along the coast. Table ES1 in **Appendix 1** identifies the preferred management options that have been developed for fourteen distinct lengths of coastline. The preferred approach provides a narrative of the management actions over the 3 epochs to 100 years hence. Details of the management actions for each epoch for each individual length of coastline are given in the full Coastal Strategy.

3.5 The preferred management actions identify a requirement for renewal or intervention works at four locations within the 20 years short term epoch. These locations are identified in Table ES2 in **Appendix 1** with an indication of the estimated cost of the works and the likely Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) that the schemes would attract from EA. The difference between the FDGiA contribution and the estimated scheme cost is the element that requires financing from other sources if the works are to progress. The Wirral Coastal Strategy has identified possible future funding sources which, if realised, would assist in reducing the funding shortfall. The potential earliest implementation date for these four locations represents the timescale set by the funding opportunity, rather than an immediate requirement for intervention. **Notwithstanding this, intervention in all four areas identified in Table ES2 is required within the next 20 years.**

3.6 In addition to the areas above where capital improvement or refurbishment works have been identified there are further requirements to undertake additional studies or actions to inform some of the longer term management actions identified in Table ES1. A summary of these actions is provided in Table ES3 in **Appendix 1**.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 The Wirral Coastal Strategy sets out a plan for managing current and future flood and coastal erosion risk. In order to carry out the management actions required and support future FDGiA applications to the Environment Agency, the Strategy requires approval from Wirral Council. Non-approval of the Wirral Coastal Strategy would result in a lost opportunity to secure future investment in Wirral's coastal defences.

4.2 Preparation of the Wirral Coastal Strategy has been funded in full by grant-in-aid from the EA. Non-approval of the Strategy may result in the EA recouping all of the preparation costs from the Council, totalling £208,000.

4.3 There is a statutory requirement to ensure that management actions developed within the coastal strategy do not conflict with environmental legislation. To this end the

coastal strategy has been reviewed for environmental compliance specifically with regard to the EU Water Framework Directive, European Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive) and also the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004. The review was subject to statutory consultation with Natural England and the EA.

- 4.4 The management of the shoreline, through the Wirral Coastal Strategy, requires consideration of funding for intervention works during the next 20 years. Whilst programming of such works can be timed to take advantage of grant-in-aid opportunities from EA, there is a need to investigate and identify additional funding sources to ensure that the works can be planned and delivered, and timed to maximise the opportunities for that grant-in-aid from the EA's programmes.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The Wirral Coastal Strategy has developed the proposed management plan from a wide range of options which have been subject to economic, environmental and social appraisal. The proposed management plan best meets the needs of the Wirral frontage.
- 5.2 It is not possible to phase works in order to carry out grant-in-aid funded work in advance of any need to source alternative funding to complete management action plans at any of the locations.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 There have been two stages of public consultation during development of the Wirral Coastal Strategy. Stage 1 sought to gather views from the public and key stakeholders on the key issues facing the coast and the output from this stage was used to produce the strategy objectives.
- 6.2 Stage 2 Consultation sought the views of the public and key stakeholders on the preferred management actions proposed in the draft Coastal Strategy. All consultation responses have been considered. Consultation responses and the actions taken are included in the Consultation Report to the Wirral Coastal Strategy.
- 6.3 Statutory consultation was undertaken with Natural England and the Environment Agency on the development of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Compliance with the Water Framework Directive and also compliance with Habitat Regulations.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community and faith groups

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 8.1 The Coastal Strategy identifies an estimate of investment required in Wirral's coastal defence assets to manage flood and coastal erosion risk. The Coastal Strategy also makes an assessment of how much of this investment can be funded through the EA's Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA).
- 8.2 For three out of the four schemes identified there is a shortfall in FDGiA required to successfully implement the schemes. Nationally, the EA advocate use of 'Partnership Funding' to provide the necessary investment to deliver schemes. The EA's guidance for Partnership Funding indicates many sources including:

- Matched contributions from regeneration initiatives
- Contributions from the Council's own resources
- Use of the EA Regional Flood and Coastal Communities (RFCC) levy
- Possible levy on local rate payers (the principle of beneficiary pays)

8.3 The shortfalls in FDGiA for the schemes identified in Table ES2 in **Appendix 1** are given below. There is a requirement to further explore the Partnership Funding arrangements to identify funding sources which could lead to successful early delivery of these schemes :

Scheme	Estimated. Cost (£'000)	Estimated EA Grant Aid (£'000)	Shortfall (£'000)
West Kirby Flood Prevention	1,800	1,000	800
Rock Park River Wall Refurbishment	1,700	700	1,000
Meols Sea Wall Refurbishment	3,750	1,000	2,750

Table ES2 also identifies the potential earliest implementation dates if the funding shortfalls are overcome. These dates do not reflect the likelihood of risk but are an indication of when potential alternative funding sources may be available. **Notwithstanding this, intervention at these locations is required within the next 20 years.**

8.4 Preparation costs associated with future appraisal of the above schemes to successful delivery are eligible for Environment Agency grant-in-aid funding, whether by in-house or external resources.

8.5 There are no IT implications arising from this report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of the Wirral Coastal Strategy been reviewed with regard to equality?

10.2 Yes and impact review is attached - <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no carbon reduction implications arising from this report.

11.2 The management plan has been subject to an environmental appraisal to ensure that its proposals do not conflict with environmental legislation.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in March 2012 indicates:

Paragraph 100 - that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk; but where development is necessary; making it safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere

Paragraph 106 - Local Planning Authorities should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast, and should identify as a Coastal Change Management Area any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast and be clear what development will be appropriate in such areas and make provision for development and infrastructure which needs to be relocated away from these areas.

12.2 Section 20 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP) includes policies on development within the coastal zone, including:

- Provision of coastal defence works (CO4 and CO5).
- Development in areas at risk of coastal erosion (CO6).

12.3 The delivery of the of the SMP policies through the management plan for the Wirral Coastal Strategy will inform the policies in the emerging Wirral Core Strategy Local Plan which was formally published for pre-submission public consultation between 12 December 2012 and 11 February 2013, and in particular:

- Policy CS34 in the Submission Draft Core Strategy is concerned with Flood Risk and Coastal Protection and will, when adopted, replace the UDP Policies CO4 and CO5 highlighted above.
- Policy CS37 (Contamination and Instability) would replace Policy CO6.
- Policy CS45 identifies flood alleviation and coast protection works as potentially falling within the scope of a future charging schedule under the Community Infrastructure Levy or through planning conditions/legal agreements.

12.4 Where planning permission is required for the works identified in the Wirral Coastal Strategy, these will be assessed in accordance with national policy and the appropriate Development Plan policy in force at the time, alongside the recommendations of the Wirral Coastal Strategy and Shoreline Management Plan themselves. The Coastal Strategy will be a material consideration when determining future planning applications and it additionally highlights the potential need for project-level Water Framework Directive, Habitats Regulations and Environmental Impact Assessments for individual proposals.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Cabinet is requested to

- (i) Approve the management plan and action plan identified in the Wirral Coastal Strategy; and
- (ii) Note the funding required for scheme delivery over the next 20 year timeframe and request that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment investigate programme and funding opportunities from grant-in-aid sources, and identify options and opportunities for the shortfalls in funding.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 The Wirral Coastal Strategy is the second in a series of hierarchical plans for the management of flood and coastal erosion risk. The Wirral Coastal Strategy has been

produced in accordance with the EA's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Appraisal Guidance and has also been subject to public consultation.

14.2 Management of Flood and Coastal Erosion risk through the Wirral Coastal Strategy demonstrates best practice and will not prejudice Wirral in pursuing EA grant-in-aid in order to deliver works to protect Wirral's coast and communities.

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Appendix 1 – Wirral Coastal Strategy Executive Summary

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Wirral Coastal Strategy (AECOM) April 2013

National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government) March 2012

North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan SMP2 (Halcrow Group Limited) July 2010 available at:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s14906/Report%20of%20the%20Director%20of%20Technical%20Services%20Appendix%20CABeng100902rep1.pdf>

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Appraisal Guidance (Environment Agency) March 2010

Wirral Unitary Development Plan February 2000

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Adoption of the Shoreline Management Plan (Minute 118)	2nd September 2010
Cabinet – Wirral Coastal Strategy and Acceptance of Environment Agency Grant (Minute 208)	4th November 2010
Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Decisions Taken Under Delegated Powers – Tender Acceptance (Minute 12)	7th June 2011
Cabinet – Wirral Coastal Strategy Additional Works (Minute 292)	2nd February 2012