

## Shoreline Management Plans (SMP)

### What is it?

A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a strategy for managing flood and erosion risk for a particular stretch of coastline, over short, medium and long-term periods. SMPs identify the best ways to manage coastal flood and erosion risk to people and the developed, historic and natural environment. They also identify opportunities where shoreline management can work with others to make improvements.

### Who is responsible?

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils (the DCs) are the authorities responsible for coast protection. They have powers to carry out coast protection works and they are the bodies, under the Coast Protection Act 1949, who have a duty to regulate coast protection works carried out by other organisations and individuals.

The Environment Agency (EA) is the authority responsible for sea defence (management of coastal flood risk) and has an overview, or supervisory, role with respect to both sea defence and coast protection. The DCs and the EA work in partnership with each other and with all those that have an interest and responsibility along the Suffolk coast. These include Natural England, with their advisory role on nature conservation, Suffolk County Council, English Heritage and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit.

The SMPs are a requirement of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which is the Government organisation with the responsibility for coastal management, and who provides a large percentage of the funds for coastal management schemes.

### How does it work?

A SMP divides the coastline into units based on shared characteristics. These units are then allocated policies for each of three time periods, or "epochs", which form the overall plan timeframe. These are the short term (up to year 2025), the medium term (2026 to 2055), and the long term (2056 to 2105).

The four standard policies considered are:

- No Active Intervention (NAI) – The “Do Nothing” policy, no investment in coastal defences;
- Advance the Line (ATL) – Build new defences;
- Hold the Line (HTL) – Repair and maintain existing defences and management operations;
- Managed Realignment (MR) – Allow the shoreline to move back or forward to a more natural position, with management to limit the movement of beach material.

There are three SMPs covering the Suffolk coast.

#### [SMP 6 Lowestoft Ness to Kelling](#)

The original SMP for the coast north of Lowestoft Ness to Kelling was produced in 1996. The first review of this plan was completed in 2006, it proved controversial but has now been approved by all partners.

The lead authority for this plan is North Norfolk DC.

#### [SMP 7 Lowestoft Ness to Landguard Point](#)

The original SMP for the Suffolk coast south of Lowestoft Ness to Felixstowe was produced in 1998. The first review of this plan was completed in early 2010 and has now been approved by all partners. Implementation of recommendations for further studies and works is now being taken forward.

The lead authority for this plan is SCDC.

#### [SMP 8 Essex and South Suffolk](#)

The SMP for Essex and South Suffolk covers the north side of the Orwell estuary to Two Tree island in Southend and is approved by all partners.

The lead authority for this plan is the EA.

A set of summary documents have been produced by the SCDC and WDC CoMT. These summarise the SMP policies and action plan for each area along the Suffolk coast. These documents can be downloaded [here](#).