

**“*Who decides?*” A study of  
governance processes across  
three coastal areas**

Final report to the East of England  
Coastal Initiative

August 2009 (finalised October 2009)

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## Non-technical overview and summary

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### Introduction

“Governance” – the way decisions are made and then implemented (or not) – is a vital aspect of every strategy, plan and action affecting the coast, but one that tends not to be addressed directly. A discussion of who *really* decides what, why and how is more likely to be held during the lunch break of a meeting on the future of the coast than in the meeting itself. Nor is it usually a subject that is examined directly by research into coastal matters.

The report on coastal governance that follows therefore needs something more than an executive summary. Some explanation of how the study was developed is also required. The paragraphs that follow explain why governance matters, why the governance of coastal issues is so difficult, how it has been studied in this project and what kind of findings and recommendations emerge.

### Why does governance matter, and why is it so difficult?

The East of England’s coast matters to the people who live and work there and to the many people that enjoy visiting it. It matters to the local and regional bodies which help shape its future. It also matters to national government, which sets the overall policy and funding for managing the coast. It is even of international importance, because of the special habitats found on many parts of the coast.

The coast is not easily managed because it means so many things to so many people. In whole or in part, it is simultaneously a protected landscape or habitat; a deprived community; a place to work in or retire to; a Key Centre for Development and Change and a regeneration priority; and a gateway to other shores or the end-of-the-line. It is all this and more.

It is also changing. The coast has always changed and it always will. Not only does it experience the social and economic tides that affect the rest of the country, but it also faces powerful forces for change coming from the sea. The coast is changing as we speak and that change brings very real threats to communities, businesses and natural assets in some areas. It is not just a challenge for the future – although as we look ahead, the pace and scale of change will increase. Climate change is expected to raise sea-levels and bring more storms and floods. It is increasingly driving policy for the coasts, as it is for many other areas of policy making.

The decisions we face about how best to manage our coast are therefore complex. They are difficult now and they are not likely to get any easier – although of course change brings opportunities as well as threats. The coast presents some unique challenges but many of the solutions lie in ‘mainstream’ economic, social and environmental policies and funding streams. In this wider context, coastal issues can easily become lost amidst other priorities.

For all these reasons, the *way* in which decisions about managing the coast are made is of great importance and it is the subject of this study. Decision-making in relation to coastal

areas, or *coastal governance*, is seldom studied in its own right although it is behind every strategy, plan and action that affects the coast. It provides the glue that holds everything together when it works – or it is the source of conflict, delays, buck-passing and missed opportunities when it doesn’t. It therefore matters.

This was recognised by the East of England Coastal Initiative, a group of partners and set of projects that was established by the Minister for the Region to help address the difficult issues encountered on the coast. The Government Office for the East of England – working on behalf of the wider Coastal Initiative – commissioned this study.

## How has governance been studied in this project?

At this point, some more explanation is needed of what is meant by “coastal governance” and how it has been examined in this study. Governance is often mentioned but not really defined. There have been few studies of coastal governance on which to build. Nor does there appear to be a useful and universal definition of what good governance looks like when applied to the coast. Rather, we have found that it very much depends on the circumstances and the issue that is being addressed. We do not therefore identify a single governance arrangement that currently applies to coastal management and nor do we suggest that there should be one. What we do is to look at the strengths and weakness of current decision-making processes.

Coastal governance, like the coastline itself, is constantly evolving so the study also looks into the future; not by imagining scenarios for climate change, erosion and flooding, but by considering how the policy landscape might evolve, and the impact this might have on governance arrangements.

In completing this study we have drawn heavily on the knowledge and experience of the Coastal Initiative Steering Group and of other local and regional people involved in managing the coast. We have based our investigation on case study work in three coastal areas: the Blackwater Estuary, Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft and North Norfolk. In each of these areas we have looked closely at how coastal issues have been treated in the various strategies and plans produced by local, sub-regional and regional bodies (particularly in Shoreline Management Plans, Local Development Frameworks, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements). From these we have extracted a small number of ‘crunchy issues’ that seemed to present the greatest challenges to those making decisions about the coast. We then identified which organisations or partnerships made these decisions and with the help of local workshops, we looked at *how* these decisions were made. We looked at how the strengths and weaknesses of existing governance arrangements might be made better or worse by various scenarios for future policy change. The three case study areas were – and are – very different places with different issues, so they illustrate well the range of challenges that exist around the region’s coast. They also demonstrate the challenge of coming up with a single, regional perspective on coastal governance and how it might be improved.

## What findings on coastal governance emerge from the study?

The full report contains an overview section and a clear set of conclusions and recommendations (Part A). Between these two is a detailed description of the three area case studies of coastal issues and governance arrangements (Part B).

Some of the findings are about how governance can be studied or understood. We have already mentioned that we found it most productive to study governance through specific issues and circumstances – right down to the level of examining actual decisions. In studying the strategies and plans for our coastal areas that dealt with these issues, we were struck by how little they had to say about the coast (other than those written specifically on coastal management). They prioritised jobs, housing, economic development and transport; and of course, these are as important to people living on the coast as they are to other communities. However, even in areas where erosion, flooding and defence are very real and significant issues, the strategies often underplayed the particular challenges and opportunities presented by coastal change. We concluded that coastal issues tended to be treated as a specialist subject that is not well connected into ‘mainstream’ strategies and programmes.

We also found that it is important to distinguish between the different decision-making roles that organisations have: using *statutory powers*, applying *financial or other resources*, or exerting *real influence* (through non-statutory plans or influential partnerships for example). We found that these different capacities to make or influence decisions tended to be poorly organised for tackling coastal issues. For example, Defra and its agencies (Environment Agency and Natural England) hold the powers to determine policy, allocate funding and decide whether specific projects happen or not, but they lack connections and accountability in the local areas where these decisions really bite. Local authorities have that local presence and democratic credibility, and some statutory powers (for coastal protection and planning for example), but lack the resources for implementation or sufficient influence over the resources of others. There is a disjunction between onshore and offshore planning regimes which limits local planning control over coastal matters and which limits the ability of local communities to have a say in, and receive some financial benefit from, many offshore developments.

Timescales are even more out of kilter. In many cases, spending plans have a two or three year perspective, determined by Spending Review cycles. Local Development Frameworks and Sustainable Community Strategies look forward 20 years or so. Shoreline Management Plans consider up to 100 years hence. Given the importance of natural processes in changing coastlines, the long-term perspective is vital. This is not to say that every plan or strategy should have a 100 year timescale; even Shoreline Management Plans are rolling documents that develop through regular reviews. The point is that this long-term perspective should always be evident in the thinking behind short term strategies or plans that have a lasting legacy in areas that are subject to coastal change. Otherwise future liabilities are created, or opportunities are lost.

The long term perspective is not always easy to grasp or hold onto, partly because the science that underpins projections of natural processes and their impact on the coast is sometimes contested and is not always asserted through Shoreline Management Plans or other strategic documents. Thus the ‘inconvenient truth’ that the shoreline of much of East of England, with its low lying areas and soft cliffs, may look radically different in 150 years time is not fully

grasped. Consequently, there is a difficulty in planning and taking those decisions that need to be taken sooner rather than later if the threats presented by the changing coast are to be avoided or mitigated, or if the opportunities are to be realised.

Communities are clearly playing an important role in coastal governance and need to do so, not just through elected representatives on local councils. We encountered 'top-down' decisions that floundered because they failed to achieve the support of local people. We also saw examples of communities which had organised around a common threat, built up a solid platform of support and knowledge, and achieved considerable influence at the highest levels of government. The North Norfolk communities facing immediate property destruction from eroding cliffs are perhaps the best examples. What is noticeable is their understanding and acceptance of the change that comes through natural processes. Their aim is not simply to hold back the sea but to find a way to manage change that they consider to be fair.

There are barriers of vocabulary/language and understanding between the highly technical projections of coastal change in the long term, for example, and the natural wish of local people to deal with immediate priorities. Perhaps a more significant barrier to decision-making is the lack of a common economic language to inform investment choices. Private landowners, local authorities proposing coastal management schemes, and government agencies making cost-benefit judgements are operating with different methods, criteria and time-horizons for decision-making. In particular, the substantial longer term changes that will arise from coastal change have not been "monetised" in a way that clearly and consistently brings them into the investment planning processes of national and local bodies.

## What recommendations on coastal governance follow?

The recommendations contained in the report are intended to allow the Coastal Initiative to take forward the kinds of issues introduced above and detailed in the main report, in a practical way. Some recommendations are pitched at national government, some at the local level, and some at regional bodies.

Amongst the regional recommendations are three for the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This presents an opportunity for the region to provide a more definite steer on how it wishes to see coastal change managed within wider spatial plans. Thus we recommend that the RSS gives more consideration to *existing* as well as new development in changing coastal areas because, as places like North Norfolk make clear, there is a need to adapt and roll-back some existing development as well as avoiding placing new development in areas at risk of erosion or flooding. We recommend, secondly, that more is done to guide economic and spatial planners in places such as Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft on how the existing regional policy for the coast (Policy SS9) should be reconciled with other policies for economic regeneration and growth. And thirdly, we recommend that the time-horizon of the new RSS, to 2031, does not preclude an active consideration of how the coast in areas such as the Blackwater Estuary will change over the next century or so and what therefore should be done over the next few decades in anticipation.

Finally, we hope that the study provides a useful contribution to understanding of how decisions on coastal management are made, and can be made better.

# 1: Introduction and approach

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- 1.1 In March 2009, SQW Consulting (SQW) was commissioned by GO-East on behalf of Sustainability East to complete a research study as part of the wider Coastal Initiative. In order to contribute to wider thinking with regard to the nature and character of “sustainable coastal communities”, its purpose – in summary – was *to examine structures and processes of governance in three coastal areas in the East of England, and to test their robustness and resilience in the context of different future scenarios.*

## Background and context

- 1.2 After many years of neglect – and prompted in large part by the imperatives of climate change adaptation and mitigation – issues relating to coastal areas have risen to the fore, both nationally and in the East of England. In the “coastal zone” (however defined) there is an increasingly clear, but complex and multi-dimensional, interface between marine and terrestrial priorities and processes, and their environmental, social and economic roles and consequences. This is raising important and challenging questions with regard to the meaning and nature of “sustainable coastal communities” and the implications in terms of governance.
- 1.3 One dimension relates to settlements in coastal areas. Nationally, the House of Commons’ Communities and Local Government Committee published a report on coastal towns in March 2007. It stated that *“Government has neglected the needs of coastal towns for too long. A greater understanding and appreciation is needed of the challenges faced in coastal towns”*<sup>1</sup>. Evidence presented to the House of Commons Committee by CLG suggested that there were very big variations in economic and social conditions across coastal areas, but that many faced a range of shared issues. These include: peripheral locations which are exacerbated by weak transport links; the impact on the economy of changing tourism trends; high levels of seasonal employment; a relatively large number of old and young people; a large number of private rented houses, and houses in poor condition (both associated with the legacy of traditional seaside tourism and guesthouses); a relatively high proportion of low income households; and relatively low levels of educational attainment, lower life expectancy and higher rates of homelessness acceptances. Many of these characteristics can be observed – in various permutations – across the East of England’s coastal settlements.
- 1.4 What is striking about this summary is its total neglect of these coastal towns’ intrinsic relationship to the coast on which they are – by definition – both sited and situated. Alongside the socio-economic arguments, there has been increasing recognition of the importance – but also the fragility – of coastal environments. These bring with them competing issues relating to conservation, fisheries, offshore energy and resource needs, and the dilemmas surrounding the management of flood risk and coastal defences – and all of this in the context of climate change. In the East of England, there are some real and immediate challenges. Coastal processes across parts of the region’s coast are very active; there has, for

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Committee for Communities and Local Government, Report on Coastal Towns, 6 March 2007

example, been substantial and rapid erosion in north east Norfolk. As sea levels rise – and in the context of a low-lying topography – the issues and dilemmas relating to coastal defences (and whether to defend or not) are rising up the political agenda. And issues of this nature put questions about coastal settlements’ socio-economic conditions – and the actions needed to effect “sustainable coastal communities” – in a completely new light.

- 1.5 The “toolkit” from which responses are currently being derived and implemented is underdeveloped. Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) – with a high level focus on flood and coastal erosion risk management – have been one part of the response. Their large-scale assessments of the risks associated with coastal processes have been used to underpin long term policy frameworks to reduce these risks, both to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner. SMPs therefore provide a framework for deciding, on the basis of available evidence, which parts of the coastline should be defended and which should not. However they are not statutory documents, their links to local people (in terms of governance and accountabilities) are tenuous, and they bring with them no implementation mechanism. Hence they are also only part of the solution.
- 1.6 Prompted by the European Parliament, the Department for Food, the Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) has – over the last couple of years – produced a series of documents advocating the concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). This boils down to treating the coast in an holistic way and “joining up” approaches towards the many different interests in coastal areas. Currently, some are sectoral/thematic (e.g. fisheries, energy, ports) while others are spatial (e.g. terrestrial planning). These different domains are thoroughly cross-cut by specific and demanding legislative and regulatory requirements, some at a national level and some with international responsibilities and obligations. Alongside all of this, there are local people living their lives in coastal settlements and – in some cases – struggling to make ends meet, to find meaningful employment, to access services, to afford homes in which to live, and to defend their communities (as cliffs erode and sea levels rise). And the questions to which there appear to be no simple answers are these: *who decides what happens, and how do these decisions get made?*

## Our brief

- 1.7 Against this backdrop, this study was commissioned as a research exercise with a focus that was strongly “bottom-up”. It was divided into three broad phases of work, each with a specific purpose:
  - **Phase I** was the most substantive part of the assignment and its principal aim was to *examine existing structures and processes of governance as they relate to three coastal areas in the East of England: Blackwater Estuary, Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft, and North Norfolk*. The output from this exercise was three “situational analyses” through which evidence was gathered and analysed and the realities of coastal governance at a local scale were played out
  - **Phase II** involved the *development of future scenarios* and then their application as a tool to test current governance processes with a view to establishing their robustness and resilience

- the purpose of **Phase III** was to *distil clear recommendations* based on the study’s findings. The intention was that these should influence approaches to policy-making, particularly at regional and national levels; and in this context, the proposed revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy in the East of England (the East of England Plan) was identified as a particular target.

## Approach and methodology

1.8 Our approach and methodology have followed closely the requirements of the brief. Hence in outline, the study has involved:

- an initial period of detailed research design – focusing particularly on the nature and process of “governance” and how this might be examined through three case studies
- a review – initially from the perspective of five “lenses”<sup>2</sup> – of the raft of strategies and plans relating to the coastal territories which defined each of our three case studies; and from this, the identification of specific issues around which processes of governance were likely to be both complex and – given the study’s overall Terms of Reference – insightful
- a detailed investigation of the extant governance processes surrounding the issues identified in our case studies, primarily through consultation with local (and some regional) stakeholders
- the development of three future scenarios which were structured primarily in response to known policy drivers
- workshops in each case study area through which the resilience and robustness of existing governance processes were considered under each of the three scenarios
- finally, a process of synthesis across the three case studies, and the development of recommendations.

1.9 Throughout this process, we have worked closely with members of our steering group and we are very grateful for the inputs that have been provided; steering group members contributed substantively to the development of scenarios and to the workshop discussions through which they were tested. In addition, we are grateful to Jeremy Owen from Land Use Consultants who took part in an internal meeting of the project team towards the end of the study; this was instrumental in helping to shape the recommendations.

## Structure of this report

1.10 The report that follows is divided into two distinct parts.

1.11 **Part A** provides an overview of the study as a whole. Intentionally, it is reasonably short and its focus is on the findings and recommendations deriving from the three case studies. It is subdivided into four chapters:

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<sup>2</sup> Economic regeneration, flood risk and coastal defence, housing and affordable housing, environmental asset management, and transport and accessibility

- building on some of the arguments set out in summary form above, *Chapter 2* considers why coastal governance is important and it outlines the approach we adopted in trying to review and analyse it
- *Chapter 3* presents – in summary form – the comparative findings from our three case studies, particularly those that are relevant to the process of governance
- *Chapter 4* describes the scenarios that we used to try and test governance arrangements and it summarises the insights that were gleaned from the testing process
- finally, *Chapter 5* draws together some conclusions from the study before making specific recommendations as a basis for moving forward.

1.12 **Part B** contains our three situational analyses. These are reasonably in-depth narratives describing the key coastal issues in each of the three case studies. They set out current processes of governance with regard to these issues and they make an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. The three case studies each follow broadly the same structure and they have been drafted to provide stand-alone accounts (hence there is some overlap between them (particularly with regard to the national and regional policy context)). The three narratives are however fundamentally different in terms of the key coastal issues they consider, and the range and composition of the governance processes that therefore “bite” locally:

- *Chapter 6* presents the findings from the **Blackwater Estuary** case study
- *Chapter 7* contains our report on the **Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft** case study
- *Chapter 8* sets out our case study findings in relation to **North Norfolk**.

1.13 There are, in addition, two supporting annexes:

- Annex A contains a detailed description of the process through which we developed our scenarios during Phase II of the study
- Annex B lists those that have contributed to the study – whether as steering group members, consultees, or workshop attendees; we are grateful to them all.

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## **PART A: OVERVIEW REPORT**

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## 2: Approaching governance in coastal areas

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### What is "governance"?

- 2.1 As a concept, "governance" is not easy to nail down. However, the United Nations (UN) has usefully characterised governance as "*the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)*"<sup>3</sup>.

### Governance in coastal areas: EU and national perspectives

- 2.2 With regard specifically to governance in coastal areas, it is arguably the European Commission that has led the way since at least the mid 1990s. In 2000, the Commission set out a strategy for Europe with regard to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). In the preamble, it observed that

*Our coastal zones are... home to a large percentage of our citizens, a major source of food and raw materials, a vital link for transport and trade, the location of some of our most valuable habitats, and the favoured destination for our leisure time. Yet our coastal zones are facing serious problems of habitat destruction, water contamination, coastal erosion and resource depletion. This depletion of the limited resources of the coastal zone (including the limited physical space) is leading to increasingly frequent conflict between uses, such as between aquaculture and tourism. Coastal zones also suffer from serious socio-economic and cultural problems, such as weakening of the social fabric, marginalization, unemployment and destruction of property by erosion. Given the coast's critical value and its potential, these problems must be solved...*

*The Commission's Demonstration Programme on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) has looked at the **many inter-related biological, physical and human problems presently facing these zones. Their cause can be traced to underlying problems related to a lack of knowledge, inappropriate and uncoordinated laws, a failure to involve stakeholders, and a lack of coordination between the relevant administrative bodies***<sup>4</sup>.

- 2.3 Hence from the outset, failures of governance were identified as an intrinsic problem and challenge. In response, the Commission required – from 2002 – that Member States should follow the principles of ICZM. These are set out in Box 2-1 overleaf.

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp>

<sup>4</sup> Communication from the European Commission to Council and the European Parliament on "Integrated Coastal Zone Management: A Strategy for Europe" (COM/00/547 of 17 Sept. 2000); emphasis added

**Box 2-1: Principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management set out by the European Commission<sup>5</sup>**

- a **broad overall perspective** (thematic and geographic) which will take into account the interdependence and disparity of natural systems and human activities with an impact on coastal areas
- a **long-term perspective** which will take into account the precautionary principle and the needs of present and future generations
- **adaptive management** during a gradual process which will facilitate adjustment as problems and knowledge develop. This implies the need for a sound scientific basis concerning the evolution of the coastal zone
- **local specificity** and the great diversity of European coastal zones, which will make it possible to respond to their practical needs with specific solutions and flexible measures
- **working with natural processes and respecting the carrying capacity of ecosystems**, which will make human activities more environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically sound in the long run
- **involving all the parties concerned** (economic and social partners, the organisations representing coastal zone residents, non-governmental organisations and the business sector) in the management process, for example by means of agreements and based on shared responsibility
- **support and involvement of relevant administrative bodies** at national, regional and local level between which appropriate links should be established or maintained with the aim of improved coordination of the various existing policies. Partnership with and between regional and local authorities should apply when appropriate
- use of a **combination of instruments** designed to facilitate coherence between sectoral policy objectives and coherence between planning and management.

2.4 The UK government’s response has been led by Defra. In 2006, the Department published *“Promoting an integrated approach to management of the coastal zone (ICZM) in England”*. Then in 2008, following public consultation, it launched *“A strategy for promoting an integrated approach to the management of coastal areas in England”*<sup>6</sup>. This set out a vision for coastal management and six underpinning objectives.

2.5 Within the strategy, issues of governance were writ large, and many of the commitments within it were concerned – implicitly – with improving governance: words like “harmonise”, “integrate”, “join up”, “involve” and “streamline” appeared frequently. But nowhere within the strategy was governance explicitly defined and nowhere – aside perhaps from the first bullet point within the vision<sup>7</sup> – was there a clear statement as to what might be achieved through better governance.

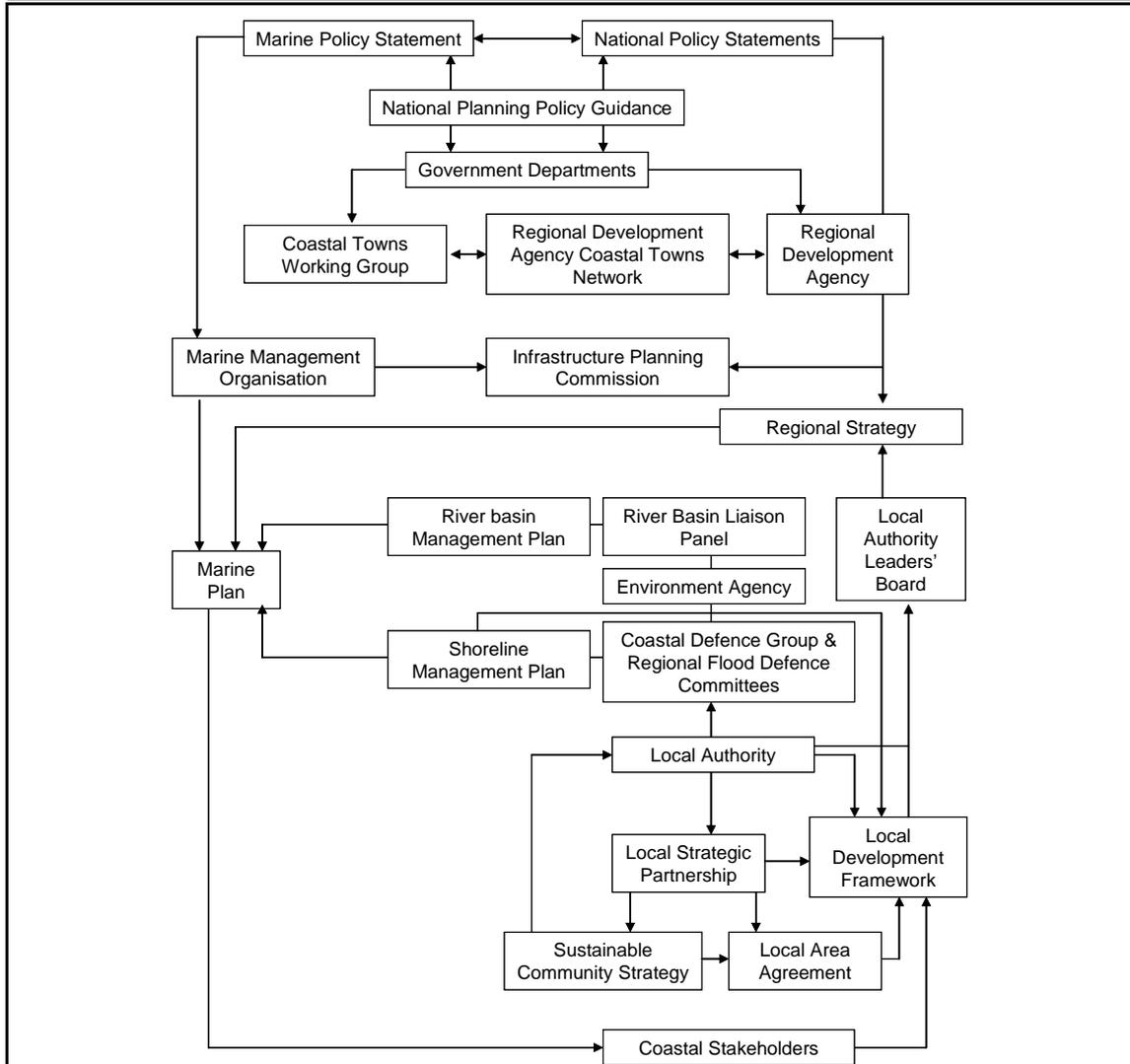
2.6 Towards the end of the strategy document, a diagram was however presented depicting the emerging “national framework for coastal integration”. This is reproduced – in simplified form – in Figure 2-1 below.

<sup>5</sup> Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2002 concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe; emphasis added

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/pdf/environment/iczm/iczm-strategy-england.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> “Sustainably managed coastal areas where competing demands and pressures have been taken into account and the social and economic needs of society have been reconciled with the need for conservation of the natural and historic environment”

Figure 2-1: Emerging National Framework for Coastal Integration



Source: A strategy for promoting an integrated approach to the management of coastal areas in England, Defra, 2008

2.7 Figure 2-1 is quite impressive. It conveys unambiguously the complexity of decision-making in coastal areas of England. But on closer scrutiny, some critical observations can be made. Notwithstanding the number of boxes and arrows, it actually misses broad swathes of policy that are critical in relation to the broader quality of life considerations in coastal areas – health, transport, crime and disorder, and so on. Additionally, the diagram omits the private sector. Yet in both terrestrial and marine planning contexts, the private sector is integral to the process of governance – as defined in paragraph 2.1 above.

2.8 However as a visual depiction of the emerging framework for coastal integration, some rather more fundamental comments must also be made:

- first, neither the graphic – nor the narrative within Defra’s strategy – provides any real insight as to the issues arising from decision-making processes over radically different *timescales*<sup>8</sup>: for example, Local Development Frameworks typically look forward 20 years while Shoreline Management Plans have the responsibility for taking a 100 year view, and there are implicit tensions between the two as a result

<sup>8</sup> The literature produced by the European Commission is arguably much stronger in this regard

- second, there is a disjunction between administrative and policy geographies that overlap but are *not spatially co-incident*. Again, in terms of governance, this presents real challenges
- third, the graphic provides no sense of the extent to which agency/organisation-level *objectives and targets can be conflicting* – even if there are lines between the boxes within which the agencies/organisations sit
- fourth – and perhaps most importantly – the diagram takes us no further forward in really understanding “*the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)*”: what does a line on the diagram actually mean, and what powers/responsibilities/accountabilities come with each of the boxes?

## Approaching coastal governance in our case study areas

- 2.9 Our brief was very much simpler than Defra’s for we were tasked with researching the process of governance from a perspective that was “bottom up” (rather than “top down”) and grounded in the specifics of three case study areas (rather than the generality of England as a whole). In this context – and early in the study – we identified two points of principle which proved to be very important.

### ***Governance needs to be understood as a series of processes...***

- 2.10 First, governance needs to be understood as an amalgam of processes which are sometimes in conflict and sometimes in harmony. Tensions arise for all sorts of reasons – including misaligned timescales, geographies, accountabilities, and objectives/targets (and the evidence base, and language/jargon and professional disciplines which underpin it). This complex web of processes is the reality of governance in coastal areas; we cannot simply “assume it away”.
- 2.11 In seeking to unpick and analyse it, we distinguished between three broad mechanisms through which governance – as defined in paragraph 2.1 above – might be effected. These are:
- **the use of powers and controls** – effectively state-sanctioned tools which are grounded in legislation and are designed to make things happen or, more usually, to stop them happening; examples include the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers, the granting of leases for offshore wind development, the designation of land in relation to particular Use Classes, and the statutory functions of local authorities in respect of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
  - **the use of resources** – the use of funding from either public or private sources to implement decisions and make them an operational reality. Private sector businesses are ultimately accountable to their shareholders in terms of how financial resources are used. In the public sector, intervention is usually intended to overcome market or distributional failures and it can be more subtle in its impact (e.g. resources might be used to facilitate interventions or investments from other parties)

- **the exercise of real influence** – effectively persuading one party to behave in a way that is consistent with objectives defined by others. In terms of “exercising influence” there is a whole spectrum of possibilities, from non-statutory strategies and plans that might have a broad base of ownership but limited traction in terms of implementation (e.g. the Regional Economic Strategy and Shoreline Management Plans), to statutory involvement in consultation processes where the degree of influence can be substantial (e.g. the Environment Agency – whilst not the ultimate decision-maker – is a statutory consultee with regard to planning applications in areas of high flood risk).

***...defined in relation to specific issues and circumstances***

- 2.12 Second, processes of governance – and assessments of what works, what doesn’t and why – need to be grounded in specifics. We quickly discovered that we could not meaningfully talk about governance in, say, Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft in a general sense: even at the level of our case studies, governance does not happen in the generality but through specific issues and particular decisions that are made (or not made) and then acted upon (or not). Hence we needed to drill down into the detail of specific coastal challenges within each case study area to be able to provide any real insight into the governance processes that were being played out within them. Chapter 3 starts to examine some of this detail.

## **3: Governance processes in relation to “crunchy” issues within three coastal areas in the East of England**

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### **Introduction**

- 3.1 Our brief specified the three case study areas on which this assignment needed to focus: the Blackwater Estuary in Essex, Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft spanning the border between Norfolk and Suffolk (on current boundaries), and North Norfolk. All three are intrinsically coastal in terms of their character as well as their geography. They are also very different places, with different challenges and priorities. They therefore presented an opportunity to consider a range of issues and governance arrangements characteristic of the region.
- 3.2 Drawing extensively on the situational analyses which together comprise Part B of this report, the chapter that follows considers in turn:
- the characteristics of each case study area and the range of “crunchy” issues that each area is facing
  - the characteristics of the key governance processes that – as a consequence – are currently shaping each area’s future
  - the extent to which these processes map onto the key principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management as defined by the European Commission and discussed in Chapter 2.

### **Understanding the case study areas – and pinpointing the seriously “crunchy” issues**

#### ***Case study cameos***

- 3.3 From our review of extant strategies and plans, it was evident that our three case study areas are tremendously diverse with regard to their environmental and socio-economic character. In the paragraphs that follow, we draw on a range of local documents<sup>9</sup> to provide an overview of each local area.

#### ***Blackwater Estuary***

- 3.4 The Blackwater Estuary is a 23km tidal estuary which extends from Sales Point to Colne Point on the coast of Essex. The estuary itself consists of open water, mudflats and salt marsh, and it is an important location in terms of nature conservation; within it are designated Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites

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<sup>9</sup> These are fully referenced in the situational analyses in Part B

of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR)<sup>10</sup>.

- 3.5 On the Estuary, there are two market towns: Maldon (with a population of about 14,000 people) and West Mersea (7,000). Nearby are two Key Centres for Development and Change<sup>11</sup> – Chelmsford and Colchester – and these areas' growth plans are likely to have some impact locally. However the areas abutting the estuary itself are overwhelmingly rural and agricultural, and there remains a proliferation of small business activity, some of it maritime-related. Tourism and leisure are important sectors, and the Estuary is very popular for sailing. In addition, however, the area has a long history in relation to nuclear energy generation and looking ahead, there is the prospect of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell.

#### *Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft*

- 3.6 With resident populations of 58,000 and 64,000 respectively, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are towns of regional significance. However, considered together, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft comprise one of the region's weakest sub-regional economies in which levels of worklessness are close to double the regional average. The economy is still strongly influenced by traditional seaside tourism (with implications for the seasonality of employment) and some traditional manufacturing industries which are in long term decline (e.g. food processing). In economic terms, however, there are great hopes linked to offshore renewables (initially at Scroby Sands) and renewed investment in port facilities at both Lowestoft and (more recently) Great Yarmouth.
- 3.7 Within the East of England Plan, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are specifically identified across a range of policies: both are designated as Key Centres for Development and Change (Policy SS3 and Policy GYL1); as Priority Areas for Regeneration (Policy SS5); as major town centres (Policy E5); and as Regional Transport Nodes (Policy T5). Hence across the key policy statements, the two towns are clearly identified as hubs for regeneration, investment and growth and in this regard, they are key nodes within the overall spatial strategy for the East of England. In order to accelerate the regeneration process – particularly with regard to key brownfield and waterfront sites in the two towns – 1<sup>st</sup> East (an Urban Regeneration Company) was created in 2005. Many of the key sites are located in areas of high – or very high – flood risk.

#### *North Norfolk*

- 3.8 North Norfolk can be characterised as a coastal area of extremely high environmental quality. The district has 73 km of North Sea coastline between Holkham in the west and Horsey in the south-east. The vast majority of this is very attractive and parts of the coast and surrounding rural landscapes are nationally recognised in the designation of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the North Norfolk Heritage Coast. North Norfolk is also important for its biodiversity and areas of nature conservation interest.

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<sup>10</sup> Blackwater Estuary Management Plan, 1996

<sup>11</sup> As defined in the East of England Plan, Policy SS3

3.9 The district as a whole is extremely rural and the population of the largest settlement (North Walsham) is 12,000; its coastal towns are a good deal smaller (the largest two (Sheringham and Cromer) each have a population of about 7,000). However, despite the proximity of Norwich (to the south), there is a high degree of live/work self-containment in the district with 73% of residents employed locally. Whilst the coastal area plays a major role in creating North Norfolk's distinctive environment and is important to the economy through tourism, it also presents two significant challenges:

- North Norfolk's cliffed coastline between Kelling Hard (near Weybourne) and Cart Gap (near Happisburgh), which is made of soft glacial deposits, has been eroding since the last Ice Age
- the low-lying coastline either side of the cliffs, is at risk from tidal flooding.

### **Key issues in moving towards "sustainable coastal communities"**

3.10 Across our three case studies, a review of local strategies and plans pointed to a raft of priorities and aspirations in the pursuit, broadly, of a better quality of life for local people. The highest level statement of priorities was provided by local areas' *Sustainable Community Strategies*, prepared by the relevant *Local Strategic Partnership*. However, on reviewing these, probably the most striking observation was just how "non-coastal" most of them were. The various visions, themes and priorities were all perfectly laudable but in most cases, they could have applied to almost anywhere. References to the coast were made in passing but across the piece, there was no real sense that the distinctively *coastal* nature of the local areas was shaping local thinking about local priorities. In some respects, this is wholly unsurprising: people's basic aspirations (for good health, for a clean and safe environment in which to lead their lives, for a home, and for employment opportunities (for them and their children)) do not vary greatly from one place to the next. At another level, however, this apparent disconnect is important, for there is a strong link between Sustainable Community Strategies and the work of Local Strategic Partnerships, and the processes through which *Local Development Frameworks* (which define spatial and development priorities) are put together.

3.11 For all three case study areas, it was only when we dug down a layer and started to look at "lens-specific" strategies and plans – notably those relating to flood risk and coastal defence, environmental asset management, transport and accessibility, housing and affordable housing, and economic regeneration – that the key coastal challenges started to emerge. And typically, it was only when we looked across different combinations of these "lens-specific" strategies and plans that the real tensions were revealed.

3.12 Our suspicion was that it was in these areas of inherent tension that governance processes might be particularly important and hence – following some testing of the issues with consultees – it was these on which our study focused. Table 3-1 attempts to summarise these seriously "crunchy" issues for each of the case study areas. To be clear: these are by no means the totality of challenges that each case study area is facing, but we considered that they were a good representation of the distinctively *coastal* issues. This assessment was validated by both our consultees and our steering group.

Table 3-1: Summarising the "crunchy" coastal issues

Case Study	"Crunchy" coastal issues
Blackwater Estuary	<p><b>BWE1: Providing employment sites (which are key to regeneration) in areas of high flood risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite being located within the Heybridge Basin (a Conservation Area), the Causeway area in Heybridge is a designated employment site and – across the wider area – there is a shortage of employment land. However the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has identified 77% of the land area of the Heybridge Basin as being within Flood Zone 3a and 15% within Flood Zone 3b</li> </ul> <p><b>BWE2: Supporting recreation and tourism in areas with environmental designations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Blackwater Estuary has a number of environmental designations which are designed to protect the quality of its habitats and wildlife. At the same time, however, the Blackwater Estuary is a prime location for countryside- and water-based recreation (for which there is much demand). The income generated is important in relation to the local economy</li> </ul> <p><b>BWE3: Securing the benefits of a new nuclear power station within a dynamic estuary setting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given changing national policies with regard to nuclear power, there is a strong possibility that a new nuclear power station could be commissioned on the southern bank of the Blackwater Estuary at Bradwell. Recognising the potential economic benefits, the Local Authority appears to be broadly in favour, as do local people. In the context of rising sea levels, any new nuclear power station would be predicated on long term sea defences – including a permanent hard structure at the mouth of a dynamic estuary</li> </ul> <p><b>BWE4: Managing the effects of "coastal squeeze"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given the low lying topography of the area surrounding the Blackwater Estuary, rising sea levels are resulting in "coastal squeeze" as inter-tidal coastal habitats are, literally, "squeezed" between the sea on one side, and the sea wall that is protecting the local community and/or freshwater habitats on the other. The consequence may be the complete loss of saltmarsh in the Blackwater Estuary by 2050</li> </ul>
Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft	<p><b>GYL1: Delivering transformational physical regeneration and mixed use re-development in areas at very high risk of flooding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through district-level Local Development Frameworks and the East of England Plan, both areas have committed to accelerated rates of housing delivery as part of an ambitious and comprehensive regeneration strategy, focused on the two towns. The principal sites that have been identified are within areas of high flood risk (Flood Zones 3a/3b)</li> </ul> <p><b>GYL2: Sustaining major infrastructure developments within the marine environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In one of the weakest economies in the East of England, the potential opportunities linked to offshore renewables and the expansion of port facilities in both towns have been welcomed and encouraged. However, there may be consequences with regard to the movement of sediment along the coast. Moreover, offshore investments in infrastructure have not been matched by onshore investments, particularly with regard to transport. Hence there are questions as to whether the potential impact of the offshore investments will be realised fully</li> </ul> <p><b>GYL3: Addressing worklessness and building community cohesion within two towns with acute deprivation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft have been very successful in securing funding for regeneration purposes over recent years. Yet levels of worklessness (and other metrics of deprivation) remain stubbornly high. Particularly in Great Yarmouth, one of several underlying factors appears to be the high incidence of disused guest houses, etc., becoming Houses in Multiple Occupation and attracting an in-moving population of vulnerable people</li> </ul>
North Norfolk	<p><b>NN1: Deciding whether to defend communities and land, and how to implement this decision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within North Norfolk, the permanent loss of homes and property to coastal erosion is already occurring in Happisburgh and it will occur elsewhere in the medium-long term. The Shoreline Management Plan sets out a policy of "no active intervention" for much of the lightly or undeveloped frontage</li> </ul> <p><b>NN2: Conserving designated areas in the context of greater flood and erosion risk, and potential coastal realignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The habitats of the North Norfolk coast are recognised as being of international importance and the management principles generally favour allowing natural processes to take place. However these habitats are under threat from coastal erosion and tidal flooding which may require compensatory habitats to be identified or other actions to be taken</li> </ul> <p><b>NN3: Improving the supply and quality of jobs through economic development in areas blighted by erosion or flood risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within North Norfolk, coastal erosion and tidal flooding are already a reality. They are creating challenges with regard to business confidence and business investment. Both have implications in terms of economic development and jobs creation in the context of a local economy which has been relatively self-contained to date</li> </ul>

Source: SQW Consulting

3.13 Reflecting on the content of Table 3-1, a few observations are important with regard to the nature of the “crunchy” issues across the three case study areas when considered in a comparative context:

- first, the issues identified with regard to North Norfolk are far more generally stated than those for the other two case study areas. In large part, this reflects the fact that the case study area was much more spatially extensive and without large concentrations of population and/or the sizeable site-specific investments (on a par to a Bradwell nuclear power station or a Scroby Sands Wind Farm) which – simply by virtue of their scale – became local *causes célèbres* and challenges in governance terms
- second, particularly with regard to Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft, there appeared to be a dearth of “crunchy issues” with any real bearing on environmental asset management. Through our early consultations, we raised questions regarding relationships with the Broads (Britain’s largest protected wetland with the status of a National Park and located immediately to the north of Great Yarmouth and to the west of both towns) and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (immediately to the south of Lowestoft). However, whilst these considerations were not wholly dismissed, they were not seen as the really “crunchy” priority issues
- third, whilst the regional “growth agenda” was very much in evidence with regard to Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft<sup>12</sup>, it was almost entirely missing from the other two case study areas (although in the Blackwater Estuary, there was a strong sense of the “growth agenda” driving the wider periphery, particularly with regard to Colchester and Chelmsford).

## Current governance processes

3.14 Across the “crunchy” issues within the three case study areas, how, then, might we summarise governance processes currently (defining governance as set out in paragraph 2.1 – i.e. “*the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)*”)?

3.15 A partial perspective on the answer is provided by Figure 3-1 which attempts to summarise the principal policy drivers impacting on each of the “crunchy” issues identified in Table 3-1 above. From Figure 3-1, some important observations can be made:

- notwithstanding the intrinsic differences between the case study areas, some of the “crunchy” issues actually cluster together in governance terms (e.g. “*Developing in areas of high flood risk*”(GYL1/BWE1/NN3) is a dilemma in all three areas)
- some of the “crunchy” issues are reasonably well embedded within extant Local Development Frameworks which are in turn consistent with the East of England Plan

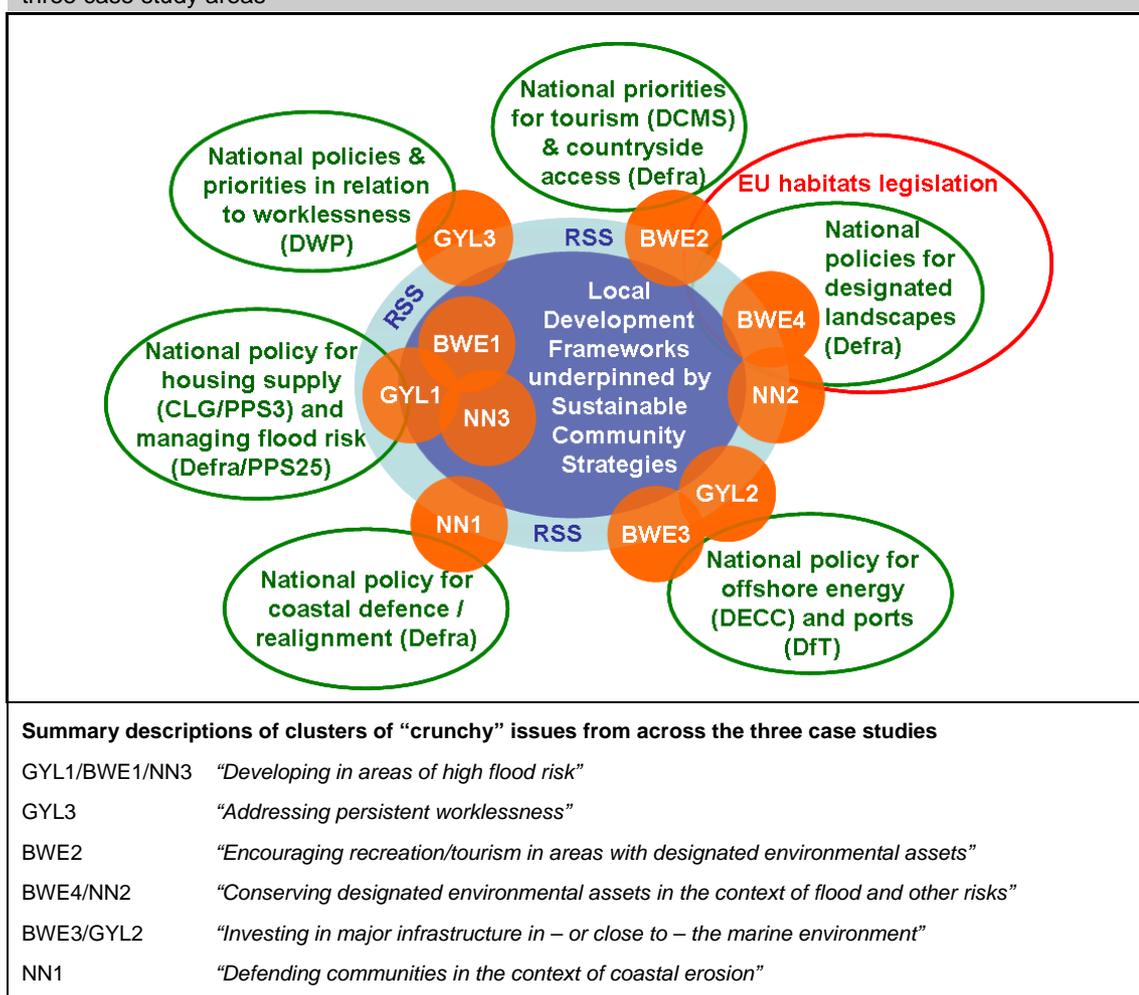
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<sup>12</sup> The focus is on regeneration rather than growth *per se* and the two towns are neither Growth Areas nor Growth Points. Nevertheless, the development model that has been adopted (and is implicit within the two LDF documents with regard to the two towns) resonates strongly with the growth agenda elsewhere in the region

(Regional Spatial Strategy) and informed by the relevant Sustainable Community Strategy (e.g. “Developing in areas of high flood risk” (GYL1/BWE1/NN3)). Others really are not (e.g. “Addressing persistent worklessness” (GYL3) and “Conserving designated environmental assets in the context of flood and other risks” (BWE4/NN2)).

- working around the margins of Figure 3-1, there is substantial scope for the different national policy drivers (which are intrinsic to the area-specific “crunchy issues”) to conflict with each other (e.g. policies regarding countryside access and the protection of designated landscapes; and policies regarding energy supply and the protection of designated landscapes).

Figure 3-1: Summarising the policy drivers with regard to the “crunchy” issues identified across our three case study areas



Source: SQW Consulting

3.16 One further comment must be made with regard to Figure 3-1. The diagram significantly simplifies the relationship between specific “crunchy” issues and the actual or potential policy responses/imperatives, for two important “filters” are omitted:

- first, there is no reference to the raft of executive agencies and non-departmental government bodies which have a relationship to both the policies and the issues – but not an “unmediated” one: within Figure 3-1, there is – for example – no reference to

the likes of the Environment Agency or Jobcentre Plus, but both are really quite important in terms of the governance processes surrounding particular “crunchy” issues (in this case, *“Developing in areas of high flood risk”*(GYL1/BWE1/NN3) and *“Defending communities in the context of coastal erosion”* (NN1); and *“Addressing persistent worklessness”* (GYL3) respectively)

- second, there is no mention of the large number of strategies and plans that do not have a statutory status but are nevertheless influential (with a broad base of ownership) and highly relevant: the role of Shoreline Management Plans is an important example, particularly with regard to *“Defending communities in the context of coastal erosion”* (NN1) and *Conserving designated environmental assets in the context of flood and other risks* (BWE4/NN2).

- 3.17 Taking all of these arguments and observations on board, what can we actually conclude with regard to current processes of governance in relation to specific “crunchy” issues in our three case study areas? Or – to cut to the quick and return to the central theme within our brief – *who decides what happens, and how do these decisions get made?*
- 3.18 We need to answer this question at two levels. In terms of the detail and the specifics, our three situational analyses in Part B of this report attempt to provide some kind of response, based mainly on evidence derived from local area consultations and workshops. And it is complicated – as evidenced in part by the fact that different individuals from the same organisations sometimes had different understandings of how, exactly, decisions were made, and who was responsible for what.
- 3.19 But for a more general response, we need to refer again to the three processes of governance which were outlined in paragraph 2.11. These related to the use of powers and controls; the use of resources; and the exercising of influence. What we can also do is – effectively – to take a series of transects across Figure 3-1, working from the local scale through to the international in relation to specific clusters of “crunchy” issues. Mapping one against the second, we end up with some kind of “map” which shows the different governance processes, the scale at which these predominantly operate and the principal agencies, organisations and partnerships through which different processes of governance are effected. Figure 3-2 illustrates the outcome of this exercise with regard to two clusters of “crunchy” issues which have wider currency: *“Developing in areas of high flood risk”*(GYL1/BWE1/NN3) and *“Investing in major infrastructure investments in – or close to – the marine environment”* (BWE3/GYL2).

Figure 3-2: Understanding governance in relation to "crunchy" issues identified in our case study areas

Spatial Scale →	EU / International	National	Regional (or sub-national)	Local
Process of governance ↓				
Powers / control ("sticks")		CLG Defra		Local Planning Authority (through LDF)
Resources ("carrots")	European Commission through ERDF (devolved to regional tier)	Environment Agency Homes and Communities Agency	Regional Development Agency	Private sector developers / land owners
Influence		Environment Agency Homes and Communities Agency	Regional Development Agency Government Office Regional Flood Defence Committee Shoreline Management Plan Steering Group	Local Strategic Partnership [Urban Regeneration Company] Local Planning Authority (through SFRA)

Spatial Scale →	EU / International	National	Regional (or sub-national)	Local
Process of governance ↓				
Powers / control ("sticks")	International energy policy and climate change obligations	DECC DfT The Crown Estate		Local Planning Authority (site of nuclear power station only; not ports and not offshore renewables)
Resources ("carrots")			Regional Development Agency	Private sector • port operators • windfarm operators • developer / operator of nuclear power station
Influence		Environment Agency Natural England	Regional Development Agency Government Office	Local Planning Authority (as consultee) [Urban Regeneration Company]

Source: SQW Consulting

3.23 With regard to our key question, "who decides what happens, and how do these decisions get made?", Figure 3-2 does not set out a simple answer. But it does provide some important insights:

- powers are almost always exercised at a national scale, sometimes with a strong international steer. Local Planning Authorities have local planning powers and for many (but not all) "crunchy" issues in our coastal areas, these are important, but key planning decisions will frequently be "called in" and the final arbiter will be CLG
- powers without resources may be like "cars without engines". For example, District Councils have powers to build and maintain coastal defences but are typically dependent upon Defra and the Environment Agency for funding. More generally, the private sector is a key source of resources in the context of our "crunchy" coastal issues. Hence the relationship between the exercise of power and the use of resources is seriously important in terms of governance: an offshore windfarm might be licensed by DECC and a lease granted by The Crown Estate, but an operator needs to make an investment decision for implementation to take place fully
- particularly in Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft (where both towns are simultaneously identified in regional policy as regeneration priorities and Key Centres for Development and Change (and hence key nodes in the spatial strategy for the East of England)), public sector resources (principally through EEDA's Single Programme and the European Regional Development Fund (administered by EEDA)) have been really important over recent years. However with public sector resources now in very short supply, the influence of public sector spend is likely to diminish. The implication may be that the relationship between those exercising power and the private sector (insofar as it is willing and able to deploy resources locally) may become relatively more important
- the regional tier is important in terms of influence, but it has very few powers and increasingly limited resources

- through the Local Strategic Partnership, the local community has some (although limited) influence in relation to “*Developing in areas of high flood risk*”(GYL1/BWE1/NN3). It has very little influence at all in the context of “*Investing in major infrastructure investments in – or close to – the marine environment*” (BWE3/GYL2). That said, our case study research pointed especially to instances of parish councils asking awkward questions on a persistent basis, thereby effectively exercising influence – not least through the local press.

## The relationship between the “*realpolitik*” of governance in our case study areas and the principles of ICZM

- 3.24 In reviewing current processes of governance across our three case study areas, one further set of observations is important. Specifically, we need to scrutinise existing processes alongside the principles of ICZM which were articulated by the European Commission in 2002 and, subsequently, adopted by member states. For obvious reasons, such an assessment cannot be made at the level of individual “crunchy” issues; instead, it requires some consideration of the amalgam of governance processes, as they relate to our case study areas. Using the principles of ICZM (outlined in full in Box 2-1)<sup>13</sup>, Table 3-2 (overleaf) provides a summary assessment for each case study area.

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<sup>13</sup> Note that here – and later in this report – we use the principles of ICZM as a framework for scrutinising governance issues on a comparable basis across our three case study areas. We have not independently reviewed or evaluated the principles of ICZM *per se* as part of this exercise. Instead, in this context, we are using the principles of ICZM simply as a consistent analytical framework

Table 3-2: Summary assessment of our three case studies in relation to the key principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) as defined by the European Commission

ICZM principle	Blackwater Estuary	Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft	North Norfolk
1. A broad holistic approach	The Blackwater Estuary has a legacy of cross thematic partnership working which is epitomised by the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan project. The Plan developed wide agreement around the issues and interdependencies on a broad range of agendas from agriculture to water recreation, and it developed an action plan for their management. The estuary and the coast are seen as an amenity, an economic resource and an environmental asset but the threat of sea level rise has not been fully internalised by the area because the current SMP policy for the area is ‘hold the line’	The dominant agenda is regeneration in the context of acute and deep-seated urban deprivation. The impact of energy policy (with regard to offshore activities) is also increasingly evident. Concerns about flood risk are writ large in terms of decision-making, but the proposed solutions are technical fixes that might ultimately be unaffordable. There is relatively little evidence of local priorities being determined with reference to full natural eco-system processes	Decision makers in North Norfolk necessarily take a broader view of the coast – because the extensive coastline encompasses defended settlements, low-lying flooding areas and eroding cliffs; and because in a larger area there is a greater diversity of circumstances and socio-economic needs and opportunities. With some deprived areas and low productivity, economic development is a priority but so is protection of the area’s rich environmental assets
2. Taking a long-term perspective	The priorities for the local community – economic, transport and tourism management – are all pretty immediate. The medium term perspectives of the regional spatial and economic strategy do not ‘bite’ in the Blackwater Estuary as the area is neither required to accommodate housing growth nor function as an economic driver for the region. The long term perspective of the SMP does have major implications for the area but they have yet to impact on the priorities for the local area which seem to be predicated on the belief that the ‘hold the line’ policy will continue	The overwhelmingly dominant time horizon is that driven by the RSS and LDFs (although in terms of interventions to effect social inclusion, timescales are very much shorter). In terms of coastal processes, etc., the RSS/LDF time frame is legitimised by consistent commitments in the SMP to “ <i>hold the line through maintaining/replacing existing defences</i> ” over the short, medium and long terms	The Shoreline Management Plans and other strategic coastal documents for North Norfolk present some highly challenging but well considered long-term scenarios for the coast and these are acknowledged in more operational plans. The area also has some very ‘here and now’ issues, especially the imminent loss of parts of some communities and habitats to erosion and saltwater flooding. Difficulties resolving these immediate challenges (particularly the issue of compensation for communities affected by coastal erosion) create a block to medium-long term action
3. Adaptive management	There are a number of examples of adaptive management in relation to habitat creation in the Blackwater Estuary. The area has a wealth of designated areas and nature conservation organisations which have been involved in piloting managed realignment in the estuary. That approach is less evident in relation to employment sites, such as the Causeway at Heybridge, where technical solutions are the preference	In this case study area, there is little evidence of adaptive management (in terms of the wider coastal eco-system), mainly because of the value of social and economic assets in two large towns (each with a population of well over 50,000 people). Instead, technical solutions have been developed in response to policy commitments	There are examples of adaptive management with communities, including the removal of homes threatened by erosion, the designation of no-development zones in areas at risk of erosion or flooding in planning policies, and the development of economic policies for areas blighted by risk. There are examples of habitat adaptation through coastal re-alignment. However, the experience of adaptation with communities has shown that when the issues are particularly difficult or strongly felt, the governance arrangements are found lacking.

<b>ICZM principle</b>	<b>Blackwater Estuary</b>	<b>Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft</b>	<b>North Norfolk</b>
4. Specific solutions and flexible measures	Development of specific solutions and flexible measures is not mainstreamed in the culture of the area’s approach to the estuary yet but there are a number of initiatives that are adopting that approach. The Managing Coastal Change Project is working with Essex Farmers to prepare for coastal change including diversifying crops and managing the maintenance of sea defences	Local solutions have been developed to respond to national policy statements that might – on the face of it – appear to be pulling in opposite directions (PPS3 and PPS25)	North Norfolk communities and the district council have taken something of a national lead in raising issues and developing solutions. In doing so they have pushed at some boundaries in national policy in order to create room for local solutions
5. Working with natural processes	There are two distinct and opposing behaviours at play in the area. The habitats creation agenda is driven to work with natural processes to allow retreat but the coastal defence agenda is focused on the maintenance and construction of coastal defences to protect the existing community	In general, the approach has been to apply technical solutions to natural processes and therefore manage them. However there is a strong awareness that the consequential impacts on natural processes need to be monitored and responses need to be developed, as appropriate. This in itself is raising some important questions in relation to governance	The Shoreline Management Plan for the eastern stretch of North Norfolk proposes a more natural coastline along most of its length. There is some acceptance that ‘roll back’ for habitats and some communities will occur and indeed it has already happened in some places
6. Participatory planning	The terrestrial planning process, part complete for Colchester and in progress for Maldon, is a highly participatory process and is required to be. The Blackwater Estuary is impacted by growth that is happening in surrounding areas and potentially subject to centrally led planning processes in some areas – e.g. proposals for nuclear power stations and proposals for compensatory habitat – meaning the area is not entirely master of its own destiny or a full participant in all planning processes that affect it	The on-shore planning process (particularly the LDFs) involves extensive consultation, public examination and – through the local planning authorities – democratic accountability. However there are two other planning regimes which are important in relation to this case study: those linked to the ports and those relating to offshore renewables. The level of local participation in both processes appears to be limited	Sustainable Community Strategies for the coastal area have been developed with a high level of community engagement. Shoreline Management Plans are still criticised for their lack of community involvement although the process for the second round of plans is said to have been greatly improved. Some major decisions such as those on offshore wind are felt to be made without sufficient local consultation or accountability

ICZM principle	Blackwater Estuary	Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft	North Norfolk
7. Support and involvement of all administrative bodies	There is not a focus for ICZM in the Blackwater Estuary against which to assess the support and involvement of administrative bodies. It is clear that the local authorities in the area struggle to provide the capacity and resource that the coastal agenda requires. This was evident in the implementation phase of the Management Plan which failed to secure resources when competing with other calls on the council's budgets.	There does not appear to be an overarching process across the terrestrial and marine environments. The key administrative bodies will have some level of involvement in most decisions, but sometimes only as a consultee and their involvement will not be formative. Potentially this could be quite challenging, particularly with regard to the funding of the infrastructures that are needed to ensure that activities on-shore and off-shore function optimally	Coastal-related partnerships in and around North Norfolk are well-developed and widely thought of as a strength. But despite the relative importance of coastal issues in the area and its status as something of a 'leading authority' at regional and national level, coastal issues still struggle to take priority amongst other, mainstream issues, such as affordable housing and transport. Links between coastal and other partnerships or bodies with wider remits (and bigger budgets) are sometimes weak
8. Use of a combination of instruments <sup>14</sup>	The Blackwater Estuary, in its Management Plan, has gone a long way in setting out how a combination of instruments – planning, enforcement and codes of conduct – can go to address the management of the Estuary. But it does not set out a long term vision for the Estuary that addresses the long term challenges of sea level rise and managed realignment. This is similarly absent from any of the other overarching strategies for the area.	With regard to Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft, there appears to be a basic disjunction between key sectoral policies (notably those relating to ports and offshore renewables) and overarching spatial ones: the formal processes of governance are quite different. That said, in the context of a seriously deprived economy, those with responsibilities for spatial policy are fully alert to the potential impacts of investments linked to sectoral policy aspirations. In harnessing these, they do not have the full range of governance levers; whether this will ultimately make a difference in terms of impacts remains to be seen	North Norfolk is relatively well equipped with instruments for planning and community engagement. It has also shown an ability to join-up with neighbouring authorities and other partnerships to operate on a wider spatial scale and to improve effectiveness and efficiency. What it lacks is the instruments or <u>levers</u> required to achieve policies when the powers or resources of others are required (e.g. there has been a failure to 'hold-the-line' in parts of the cliff despite that being the policy; there is a failure to resolve the 'defending (or compensating) coastal communities' issue). At the root of this is a failure by local, regional and national players to line up policies and funding behind agreed goals so that implementation can be achieved.

<sup>14</sup> The exact meaning of this principle is not entirely clear, even from the full text provided in Box 2-1. Throughout this report, we have taken it to mean “the degree of integration between sectoral policies (e.g. with regard to ports, energy, etc.) and spatial policies (relating to specific areas)”

3.25 From Table 3-2, the overall conclusion is that existing governance processes fall some way short of the principles of ICZM in all three of our case study areas. The one that comes closest is, arguably, North Norfolk, followed by Blackwater Estuary, with Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft some way adrift. This assessment is not a statement of “good and bad” and nor is it, at any level, a judgment on local stakeholders. However, in reaching this conclusion, it is important to unpack its underlying causes and draw out some wider implications. We do this by responding to two key questions.

***Why – when they are operating within the same regional, national and international frameworks – are governance processes within some case study areas closer to the principles of ICZM than others?***

3.26 In our view, the answer to this first question is embedded within the narrative at the start of this chapter. Although all three case study areas are intrinsically coastal, they differ substantially from one other in terms of the range, scale and severity of issues they are facing *now* and the steps that need to be taken urgently in response.

3.27 We observed in paragraph 3.10 that the high level aspirations set out in the Sustainable Community Strategies are very similar. But the local implications are actually quite different: the extent and intensity of deprivation is far higher in Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft than in the other two areas and – in a predominantly urban setting – the quality of the built environment is (in general) very much poorer. Achieving a higher quality of life in Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft therefore brings with it a distinctive set of imperatives which are seriously challenging. In part, their scale and immediacy are such that longer term issues with regard to the natural environment inevitably take second place. But this tendency is exacerbated – and to some extent legitimised – by national policy, particularly with regard to flood defences: the scale of the two settlements is such that existing development will be defended in the short, medium and long terms. And – perhaps perversely – once these “ground rules” are established, the need to engage with the surrounding issues is much reduced: a technical solution will be found.

3.28 Conversely, in North Norfolk, which is generally more prosperous and with a very high quality natural and built environment, the priorities are different. The area’s geomorphology is such that issues around coastal defences and eroding cliffs constitute a real and immediate concern. Necessarily, therefore, some kind of engagement with the realities of coastal change is a matter of priority, not a medium/long term aspiration once more immediate concerns are addressed: for North Norfolk, the natural coastal processes *are* the immediate priority.

3.29 But is the implication that – as a concept – ICZM really only has currency in particular types of coastal areas? Specifically, does it only have traction if (as in North Norfolk) local areas meet one or more of the following criteria:

- that engagement with natural environmental processes is widely recognised (including by local people) to be an immediate priority?; and/or
- that acute and systemic deprivation (and all that implies in terms of poor access to homes and jobs, and the basic components of “quality of life”) is not an overwhelming concern, and hence there is scope to assess priorities more broadly?; and/or

- that the local area is predominantly rural and therefore the local importance of the natural environment (both marine and terrestrial) is *relatively* greater?
- 3.30 Our judgement is that in these circumstances, the concept of ICZM has more intuitive appeal and is a much “easier sell”. But, the basic concept is equally relevant in areas – like Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft – in which the immediate priorities are some way removed from natural environmental processes. However, in this second set of circumstances, the concept of ICZM needs to be used much more subtly and in a way that is cognisant of the different layers and processes of governance that were introduced in paragraph 2.11 and explored in Figure 3-2. Additionally, we might suggest that the concept ought to be considered in a formative sense in moulding future arrangements – but this needs to be taken forward with a good deal of care and local sensitivity.

***What appear to be the blockages to a more fulsome adoption of the principles of ICZM?***

- 3.31 We observed in paragraph 3.25 that of the three case studies, North Norfolk was the one that came closest to achieving the principles of ICZM. But we also commented that in important respects, even North Norfolk fell short. By way of conclusion, it is useful to consider why. From our case study work, two factors – both of which are concerned intrinsically with governance – stand out.
- 3.32 First, *while there are examples of good practice in terms of participatory planning within the Local Authority District of North Norfolk, any notion of participatory planning falls apart when the backdrop shifts to the marine environment.* In the North Norfolk case study, the issue arose with regard to offshore wind power (which also featured prominently with regard to Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft). Broadly similar observations were also made in planning for ports expansion (Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft) and nuclear power installations<sup>15</sup> (Blackwater Estuary). In terms of marine planning processes, the mechanisms for local participation appeared to be seriously weak and underdeveloped. In this context, it is difficult to envisage a thorough embedding of the principles of ICZM.
- 3.33 Second, *while there was – in general – a good understanding of the dynamic nature of the North Norfolk coastline and an acceptance as to the implications, there appeared to be a possible missing link, or gap, in the decision-making chain from strategic policy to practical plans.* These issues were especially evident in terms of the relationship between the non-statutory and long term (100 year) Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) and the statutory but short-medium term (20 year) Local Development Framework. The gap we observed was not only the planning of practical actions, but also agreement at the SMP level or above on who needs to lead the planning and delivery of these actions, what powers and resources they need, and how the SMP Steering Group (plus regional/national partners) might work together to enable this. In North Norfolk, Happisburgh amply demonstrates the consequences of a collective failure to resolve issues of this type; thus it is left to the District Council and local action groups to pick up the pieces and lobby central government (at ministerial level) for the support they see as necessary. The institutions and partnership represented on the SMP steering group are noticeable by their absence from the actual management of cases such as

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<sup>15</sup> Although not marine, this is close to the Estuary and it decisions with regard to nuclear power stations are taken outwith local planning processes

this, despite it being a pivotal challenge for the SMP that they collectively own. A solution to governance failures of this type would seem to be essential in advancing the principles of ICZM.

## 4: Using scenarios to test the resilience of coastal governance processes

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### Introduction

- 4.1 The discussion in Chapter 3 is important in terms of understanding the *status quo* as it relates to coastal governance across three case study areas. However it says nothing at all about the resilience or "fitness for purpose" of those processes in the context of changing conditions. Yet coastal areas are subject to continuous change.
- 4.2 The most fundamental uncertainty – and in coastal areas, undoubtedly the most important – is that associated with climate change and there is an urgent need to mitigate and adapt to its impacts. But there are also other changes which relate more immediately to processes of governance. In particular, there are three Bills currently working their way through parliament and one that has recently been enacted. All four will have profound consequences for coastal areas in terms of *who decides what happens, and how these decisions get made*. Specifically:
- the **Marine and Coastal Access Bill** – which is introducing legislation concerned, *inter alia*, with marine planning, marine licensing, the management of fisheries, and coastal access
  - the **Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill** – which, following the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, is providing the legislative basis for a single Regional Strategy (bringing together regional economic and spatial strategies) and a statutory duty for upper tier local authorities to prepare local economic assessments
  - the draft **Flood and Water Management Bill** – which is seeking to improve how we prepare for and respond to flood emergencies and protect water supplies during drought
  - the **Planning Act, 2008** – which introduces a new system for approving major infrastructure of national importance and sets out a key role for a new Infrastructure Planning Commission (which will be formally in operation from October 2009).

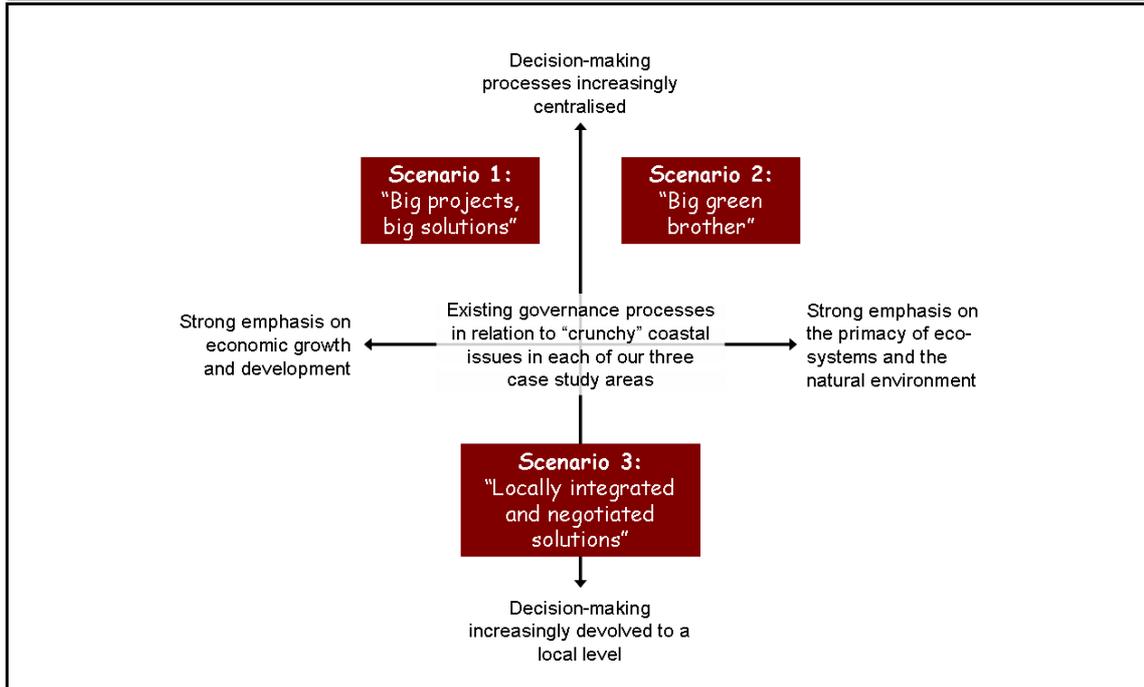
### Three policy-based scenarios

- 4.3 In order to consider the possible impacts of these and other policy changes – in relation to processes of coastal governance – we developed three policy-based scenarios<sup>16</sup>. These are illustrated in Figure 4-1 and – as imagined but plausible futures – their content is summarised in Table 4-1, which follows.

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<sup>16</sup> A full explanation of the process through which these were developed is provided in Annex A

Figure 4-1: Policy-based scenarios<sup>17</sup>



Source: SQW Consulting

Table 4-1: Description of policy-based scenarios

Scenario	Key features
Scenario 1: “Big projects, big solutions”	<p>The result of the primacy of economic and development-focused outcomes in decision-making processes is a number of large scale projects and developments - such as housing targets, plans for nuclear power stations, etc. - driven by the national priorities.</p> <p>This is a world where strategic planning decisions are made at national level. However associated with these developments is the acknowledgement of the requirement to mitigate adverse environmental impacts. This results in associated large scale mitigation activity such as carbon capture and storage, offshore renewables, and investment in high speed rail and other national public transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Decision-making is likely to be relatively quick; indeed, one of the drivers for this scenario is the growing levels of frustration in terms of how long it takes to “make things happen”. Linked to this, support for big strategic solutions will be driven by the assessment of technical cost-benefit analysis over the long term.</p>
Scenario 2: “Big green brother”	<p>When priorities are set nationally with reference to the primacy of the environment, the result is likely to be strategic-level decisions on coastal retreat; the wholesale abandonment of development in flood zones; and directive policy with regard to the protection of biodiversity and the quality of marine environments, etc.</p> <p>Under Scenario 2, the emphasis is likely to be on development of policy that will mitigate climate change or contribute to a change of behaviours rather than end-of-pipe or retrospective solutions. There may be relatively little consultation and dialogue with local communities; instead, the imperative is to enable natural ecosystems to work fully and well, and for economic development to work within those limits.</p> <p>In order to support the transformation of the economy to one that mitigates and adapts itself to the effects of climate change, resources may be devoted to supporting carbon capture and storage, renewable generation and incentives to protect and enhance habitats. These are likely to be delivered via a larger number of smaller schemes relative to those delivered under Scenario 1.</p>

<sup>17</sup> Note that “big green brother” was not originally the title we adopted for Scenario 2. However it was suggested at one of the workshops and as it captures exactly the essence of Scenario 2, it is adopted here.

Scenario	Key features
Scenario 3: “Locally integrated and negotiated solutions”	<p>Under this scenario, there is an increasing recourse to sub-regional and local solutions, which tend to be more integrated because at the local level ‘joining-up’ is a practical necessity.</p> <p>There is an emphasis on creating local jobs for local people and providing affordable housing within communities; the types of priorities represented in the current Sustainable Community Strategies covering coastal communities. But at the same time, coastal communities are only too aware of issues such as coastal erosion and flooding and are therefore increasingly driven to ensure their overarching community strategies address environmental imperatives.</p> <p>The devolution of decision-making to local levels will lead to a regulated framework within which local areas determine priorities. This is likely to lead to smaller scale development and potentially locally-generated and bespoke solutions. Decisions will be negotiated across often-competing local priorities and so the decision-making process will be long and consultative. Regional and national bodies will have more of an advisory role and will increasingly face the challenge of presenting technical and national-strategic arguments to communities who tend to have less technical, more immediate and more local perspectives</p>

*Source: SQW Consulting*

- 4.4 The use of the scenarios in workshop discussions in each of the three case study areas was analogous to a pebble being thrown into a pond: what matters is not so much the shape or composition of the pebble (i.e. the three scenarios) but the consequences for the pond (in this case the processes of governance in coastal areas). Hence we make no further comment on the scenarios themselves, other than to say that they reflect plausible directions already evident in government policy and that they serve to stretch current governance arrangements in a way that is revealing. Instead, we turn to consider the findings of the scenario testing process: *how resilient are existing processes of coastal governance, and in what ways (and why) might these processes change?*
- 4.5 In reflecting on these findings, it is important to note that breakout groups within the three workshops were given free reign to consider one, two or all three scenarios in relation to the governance processes identified for specific “crunchy” issues. In practice, time was limited and so many groups focused on one scenario in relation to the governance of one issue. The discussion that follows needs to be understood in this context.

## Findings from the scenario testing workshops

- 4.6 In the paragraphs that follow, we attempt to summarise the outcomes from three break-out group discussions in each of three workshops (nine sets of observations in all). With one main outlier (which is discussed at the end of this section), the comments that were made cluster under two main themes: interestingly, while the implications of Scenarios 1 (“big projects, big solutions”) and 2 (“big green brother”) were judged to be broadly similar in terms of coastal governance processes, the consequences of Scenario 3 (“locally integrated and negotiated solutions”) were thought to be really quite different, but in all cases, the different scenarios were associated with clear challenges to governance as well as opportunities.

### ***Exploring future processes of coastal governance... under Scenarios 1 (“big projects, big solutions”) and 2 (“big green brother”)***

- 4.7 In considering the implications of Scenarios 1 and 2 for processes of coastal governance, workshop participants from across our three case study areas reached conclusions with regard to three main topics.

*Clarity in terms of lines of responsibility*

- 4.8 First, there was agreement that under either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2, there would – simply – be **much greater clarity in terms of “who is responsible for what”**. The implication was that the current situation in each case study area is so complicated in terms of governance that the ultimate decision-makers are not always known, and neither is the process through which decisions are made. The greater clarity that would be the corollary of either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2 was welcomed, largely irrespective of the policy driver underpinning it.

*The “size of the stakes”: risks and rewards*

- 4.9 Second, under both Scenario 1 and 2, it was acknowledged that **decisions with regard to implementation priorities would be much “chunkier”** and less “scatter-gun”. Potentially, some coastal areas could gain substantially from this: currently most are at the margins of implementation and investment decisions. However, it was also recognised that whilst there could be some coastal area “winners”, there were also likely to be “losers”, and that for the “losers”, there could well be nothing at all. Hence both Scenarios were judged to be somewhat brutal although for a minority of places – coastal areas included – this could be advantageous.

*The basis for community engagement*

- 4.10 Finally, it was recognised that under both Scenarios 1 and 2, the basis for community engagement would change. However there was a range of views as to the consequences:
- some argued that the emergence of a “common external enemy” would galvanise local interests and that in turn, local differences would be put to one side as the focus shifted to key issues; the result, it was suggested, could be a **much more effective “community voice”** than is currently heard and one that could engage in the process of governance very effectively
  - others maintained that the consequence would be disengaged, disempowered and disenfranchised local communities.

***Exploring future processes of coastal governance... under Scenario 3 (“locally integrated and negotiated solutions”)***

- 4.11 With regard to the consequences for coastal governance deriving from Scenario 3, our workshop participants made four important observations. Taken in the round these point – perhaps surprisingly – to some equivocation with regard to the desirability of Scenario 3.

*The scope for inventive, bespoke and tailored solutions*

- 4.12 On the “plus” side, Scenario 3 was considered to give far greater scope for local coastal communities to develop **inventive, bespoke and tailored solutions** in response to the specific challenges facing particular areas. Elsewhere in the East of England, there are examples of this type of response being developed. For example, the Suffolk Integrated Coastal Zone Management Initiative is looking to test principle of ICZM in the Alde-Ore Estuary. However, the view was expressed that where innovative solutions have emerged, it

is *despite* existing wider processes of governance, not *because* of them. In the view of some workshop participants, then, Scenario 3 could allow for solutions of this nature to become common-place.

*The breadth of the “community perspective”*

- 4.13 However, this flexibility also brought with it some real concerns. Specifically, would solutions be so bespoke and so local in origin and focus that economies of scale would be lost, and any sense of learning from – or being interconnected with – other places would be completely disregarded? Such an outcome was considered by some workshop participants to be a real possibility, and an undesirable one at that: the coastal areas of the East of England are nothing if not interconnected (not least through natural environmental processes) and “blinkered localism” could therefore be seriously unproductive.

*The need for real expertise*

- 4.14 A related point concerned the sheer complexity of the issues that needed to be addressed and in this context, there were worries that whilst laudable, **bespoke and local solutions could also be very amateurish**. Within the local community, could there possibly be a robust and intelligent understanding of the emerging science underpinning coastal management? And while “buying it in” is a possible solution, at a local level it is extremely expensive and inefficient.

*The effectiveness of local partnerships*

- 4.15 Finally, the observation was made that Scenario 3 would tend to **expose and exaggerate any existing weaknesses in local partnership arrangements**. Furthermore, under Scenario 3 (unlike either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2), there would be no external catalyst for resolving these weaknesses. Without seriously good and strong community leadership (and there was no indication as to where this might come from), Scenario 3 could therefore be a recipe for stasis and inertia. And given the scale of the challenges facing coastal areas, this outcome was considered to be unacceptable.

***The outlier: exploring future processes of coastal governance... under Scenarios 1 (“big projects, big solutions”) and 3 (“locally integrated and negotiated solutions”)***

- 4.16 One final observation made during our scenario testing workshops was important, and it needs to be captured. It concerns the implications of a strongly economic policy driver, whether expressed through Scenario 3 or (more likely) Scenario 1. The key argument that was articulated can be summarised simply: that a strongly economy-led policy focus would tend towards **short term** priorities, actions and interventions with an emphasis on the “here and now”. Hence under both Scenario 3 and Scenario 1, there was real concern that a misalignment of timescales could continually delay some of the biggest challenges for coastal governance, notably those summarised at the end of Chapter 3 in the context of North Norfolk.

## Conclusions from the scenario testing

- 4.17 In many respects, the scenario testing process represented the culmination of this study. To get to it, we had to review a raft of strategies and plans to identify key “crunchy” issues; we had to examine these in some detail such that we could isolate the key – and multifarious – processes of governance in each coastal area; we then had to scrutinise these processes to generate some insight into the key questions of “*who decides what happens, and how do these decisions get made?*”. Through the scenario testing exercise – and with significant input from local stakeholders – these findings were examined and probed with a view to establishing their veracity, their overall resilience, and the possible consequences – for governance – of various plausible (but not inevitable) combinations of policy changes.
- 4.18 Chapter 3 concluded by assessing the extent to which extant governance arrangements meet the principles of ICZM as set out by the European Commission. Drawing on the findings from the scenario testing workshops (and with implicit reference to all three case study areas) but also looking more broadly, Table 4-2 overleaf completes a similar exercise. It highlights potential positive and negative impacts for governance under each of the three scenarios.
- 4.19 The results underline the use of scenarios in the study as a tool but not an end in themselves. None of the scenarios is exclusively good or bad, so the recommendations are not that one should aim for, or avoid, a particular scenario. Instead, there is a need to be guided by the risk and opportunities associated with each of these “governance futures” in developing policy and mechanisms for implementation. The recommendations we present in Chapter 5 have been guided by this principle.

**Table 4-2: Scenario impacts on the ICZM principles**

<b>ICZM principle</b>	<b>Scenario 1: “Big projects – big solutions”</b>	<b>Scenario 2: “Big green brother”</b>	<b>Scenario 3: “Locally integrated”</b>
1. A broad holistic approach	Although there is clarity of vision at national level the vision is viewed as partial in favour of economic considerations. Decision-making is quicker and dominated by methodologies that demonstrate impact. Partly because methodologies are still being developed, eco-system service values are not fully included	Although there is clarity of vision at national level the vision is viewed as partial in favour of environmental considerations. Decision-making is quicker and dominated by scientific and nature conservation rationales and methodologies	The chief benefit of the “locally integrated” scenario is that at local level it is not only possible to bring different agendas together it is almost impossible not to. Inconsistencies and conflicts that might have existed at a national policy level have to be addressed locally somehow.
2. Taking a long-term perspective	National stakeholders are considered better able to take the long term perspective and make tough decisions which might be based on the cost and benefits to the wider UK or global community	National stakeholders are considered better able to take the long term perspective and make the tough decision which might be based on the cost and benefits to the wider UK or global community. In this scenario those decisions might inflict short or medium term economic pain and impact on the UK competitiveness	It is considered more difficult to take a long term perspective at local level – especially because of the political imperatives of responding to the needs of the current community. As a result, the danger is long term challenges are not addressed and UK plc misses out on big projects and targets
3. Adaptive management	The long term perspectives combined with big projects approach is not as flexible to new information or technology and consequently not as adaptive	The scenario was considered to be adaptive because it is essentially benign in setting out what should happen. It provides a framework of limits within which anything is possible	Local stakeholders are required to be competent and literate in a number of disciplines in order to respond adaptively to the challenges of the coast. This is not impossible, just hard.
4. Specific solutions and flexible measures	This scenario was not likely to generate locally specific solutions for all areas – but where the local and national agendas coincided there was clear direction, political will and resources to make things happen	Although the scenario might promote adaptive management, there is a danger that the weight of regulation may mean it is very difficult for some areas to do anything i.e. they become blighted with environmental legislation	This scenario is considered to deliver the best opportunities for specific, tailored and potentially very innovative solutions and approaches. However it was acknowledged they that may be hard to deliver as there would be no clear funding and lots of competition for national attention
5. Working with natural processes	Economic drivers are primary this scenario but set in the context of achieving sustainable growth. However, the nature of high level policy making is not likely to allow for tailored – and therefore better – solutions which work with natural processes	The functioning of eco-systems are primary within decision-making so working with natural processes is at the forefront of approaches under this scenario	At local level working with natural processes should be supported by the holistic approach and the ability to develop specific solutions. But there was concern that it might be difficult to ensure coherence of approaches at the regional or national level

ICZM principle	Scenario 1: “Big projects – big solutions”	Scenario 2: “Big green brother”	Scenario 3: “Locally integrated”
6. Participatory planning	<p>This world is likely to be dominated by major infrastructure projects which are developed and determined centrally. This could go one of two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it could – by taking the tough decisions - give clarity so local areas can get on with it.</li> <li>alternatively, by threatening to disenfranchise the local community, it could galvanise local people against a common enemy</li> </ul>	<p>Under the “big green brother” scenario, projects or conservation zones feel imposed on the local community. Again, as per “big projects – big solutions” this could go two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the tough decision is taken so the local community is freed up to make the best of what it has to work with; or</li> <li>the local community perceives that it is less important than birds and habitats and this then mobilises the community in opposition.</li> </ul>	<p>The participatory process is critical under this scenario and it is likely to have to work very hard – to interest people, educate them and engage them in quite a sophisticated way in issues and challenges for the coast. Consequently, it will be a slow process but it should deliver a local mandate for action</p>
7. Support and involvement of all administrative bodies	<p>There is likely to be a clear chain of command but that will inevitably leave out core parties who are affected by the decisions.</p> <p>For those areas that are included there are closer working relationships with national government and more funding to make things happen</p>	<p>There is likely to be a clear chain of command but people may feel their interests are not at the heart of decision-making.</p> <p>For those areas that are included there are closer working relationships with national government and more funding to make things happen</p>	<p>Delivery under the “locally integrated” scenario is likely to require a high degree of local partnership working which may be impenetrable to those outside the process.</p> <p>This scenario is considered to strengthen partnerships as they <i>rise to the challenge</i></p>
8. Use of a combination of instruments	<p>The big projects that are likely to result from this type of top down policy making are likely to be included in all local strategies but there will be little room to mould and shape them to local objectives</p>	<p>The “big green brother” will tell you what you can’t do but would fail to provide a vision for what you can do. The scenario would be reliant on the local level to galvanise interests in a common direction</p>	<p>The nature of integration would mean all available tools can be marshalled in achieving the agreed local vision and objectives</p>

## 5: Conclusions and recommendations

### Overall conclusions with regard to governance from the three situational analyses

- 5.1 Reflecting on the discussion in Chapter 3 (underpinned by the contents of Part B of this report) and taking into account the findings from the scenario testing workshops set out in Chapter 4, we can draw some conclusions with regard to the effectiveness of existing governance processes. These in turn provide an important insight into the implicit challenges within the question that has shaped this study as a whole: *who decides what happens, and how do these decisions get made?* In framing these summary observations, it is useful to reflect again on the eight ICZM principles identified by the European Commission.

Table 5-1: Understanding the challenges of coastal governance – as evidenced through the case study research

ICZM principle	The challenges of governance identified in the case study areas
1. A broad holistic approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All three:</b> There is no mechanism to establish an overall vision for the coast (not the SMP, not the SCS, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Three planning systems with very different regimes do not really articulate with each other (terrestrial, ports, offshore renewables). They also have different lines of accountability nationally</li> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Disjunction across the planning regimes (onshore and offshore) in terms of mechanisms for extracting “developer contributions” limit the extent to which supporting investments can be made locally (i.e. to the extent that there is anything like a “developer contribution” with regard to offshore renewables installations, it is recouped centrally; the local area gains nothing from it yet bears the surrounding costs)</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> SMPs show that different organisations find it difficult to sign up to the same set of policies for an area</li> <li>• <b>BWE:</b> Realignment to address coastal squeeze is not linked to an overall estuary strategy</li> </ul>
2. Taking a long-term perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Inter-related decisions are unlikely to be optimal (or of maximum impact) if the timescales to which they relate are misaligned</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> It becomes impossible to plan and take actions for the medium or long term issues unless immediate problems are tackled; the misalignment of timescales is again the underlying issue</li> <li>• <b>BWE:</b> Long-term risk factors are not fully taken into consideration in plans/priorities</li> </ul>
3. Adaptive management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BWE:</b> Lack of mechanisms to support alternatives to coastal defence (no flexibility to use money otherwise)</li> <li>• <b>BWE:</b> There is no transition plan for existing sites that will be affected by future coastal change</li> <li>• <b>BWE:</b> No mechanism for managing retreat and coastal change for farming</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> While a mechanism for compensating habitats and species exists, the perception is that there is nothing similar for communities</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> Adaptive management works but not when it really matters (e.g. Happisburgh)</li> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Policy decisions with regard to flood risk management mean that the need to engage with issues relating to long term adaptive management has effectively been removed: the risks surrounding flooding have not disappeared but the coast will be defended and hence the imperative to consider adaptive management is limited</li> </ul>

ICZM principle	The challenges of governance identified in the case study areas
4. Specific solutions and flexible measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All three:</b> Coastal issues are sidelined slightly into special initiatives and strategies. When put into the mainstream they tend to get ignored or overwhelmed by other priorities</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> Much of the strategic work is not yet at the stage of specific solutions – e.g. the LAA has a target of doing a risk assessment and creating an action plan but Happisburgh needs immediate solutions</li> <li>• <b>BWE &amp; GYL:</b> There are challenges in embedding national decisions (e.g. nuclear power stations, offshore renewables) to local circumstances</li> </ul>
5. Working with natural processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Underlying presumption that existing development in major settlements will be defended, plus policy and funding to develop GYL means that the prospect of radical change is not contemplated. Natural processes are entirely defended against and the surrounding challenges/opportunities are “assumed away”. Perversely, at a policy level, the risk disappears</li> </ul>
6. Participatory planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Imposed solutions don’t work, and the engagement of elected members – local councillors and MPs – has been very important</li> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Parish councils, community groups, etc. can be very important in keeping others under scrutiny with regard to key governance processes</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> An outside threat or shared local priority is essential to galvanise local opinion, leading to sufficient pressure to make changes. Momentum, motivation and critical mass of opinion are essential</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> The district council’s work provides an efficient link between communities and central government but all the same, the general feeling is that there is not a strong enough outlet, or hearing, for local opinion</li> <li>• <b>BWE:</b> There are challenges in defining the appropriate community relevant for decision-making</li> </ul>
7. Support and involvement of all administrative bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Decisions can be negotiated when the actors involved behave as “informed pragmatists”</li> <li>• <b>GYL:</b> Requires transparency, honouring commitments</li> <li>• <b>NN:</b> Successful partnership enable bodies to develop policies and plans together, but it has its limits when it comes to action or establishing the necessary means to implement difficult policies.</li> <li>• <b>NN/All three:</b> There is a missing link between the high level and long term vision expressed by the SMPs and practical implementation of this. There is a need for some form of delivery plan – agreed by all and resourced</li> </ul>
8. Use of a combination of instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All three:</b> There is a disconnect between powers policies, accountabilities and resources – SMPs provide a policy but without powers, EA has powers but no local accountability, LADs have accountability but no resources</li> </ul>

Source: SQW Consulting

## Recommendations

- 5.2 Reflecting on the overall findings of the study, we make a number of recommendations. In the round, these are concerned with effecting better processes of coastal governance.
- 5.3 This objective itself needs a moment’s reflection: on the face of it, “better governance” is about processes rather than outcomes. With regard to the recommendations that follow, the ultimate goal must – as set out in our brief – be one of achieving “sustainable coastal communities”. But in seeking to achieve this, we are struck again by the arguments set out by the European Commission and summarised in paragraph 2.2. To paraphrase, the Commission concluded that *the cause of the many inter-related biological, physical and human problems presently facing coastal zones can be traced to underlying problems related to a lack of knowledge, inappropriate and uncoordinated laws, a failure to involve stakeholders, and a lack of coordination between the relevant administrative bodies.* Hence the Commission’s

view is that *governance failures are the underlying coastal challenge and the principal blockage in addressing them*. For this reason, although intrinsically process-related, the issues with regard to coastal governance are a critical factor in relation to the goal of sustainable coastal communities. They need to be taken seriously in their own right.

5.4 The recommendations that follow are clustered into four groups. Cutting across all four, there are **three overarching imperatives**, all of which are intrinsic to the more detailed recommendations; indeed, these can be treated as high level, cross cutting recommendations in their own right.

- first, an “Achilles’ heel” of current governance processes in coastal areas is the **total misalignment of timescales**: spending decisions are heavily influenced by the cycles linked to Spending Reviews (typically 3 years); the timescale for Local Development Frameworks and Sustainable Community Plans is generally in the order of 15-20 years; and the time horizon of Shoreline Management Plans is up to 100 years. Steps need to be taken to manage the implications of these disjunctions and most of the recommendations that follow are concerned – one way or another – with this challenge and the steps that might be taken to manage it
- second, there is currently a **major disjunction between terrestrial planning processes and those in the marine environment**. Working across this “fault line” will be imperative going forward
- third, as set out in paragraph 1.1, one of the overarching questions that this study was intended to inform concerned the definition of “sustainable coastal communities”. This issue has not been examined directly through this piece of work, but many of our findings are relevant to it. In our view **“sustainable communities” – whether in coastal areas or rural areas or anywhere else – are more about processes than end-points (i.e. processes of resource use, of inclusion, of access to services, etc.)**. In this context, governance is again key and improvements to governance are a priority.

5.5 Since this study was substantially completed, government has published two documents which are materially relevant to our recommendations<sup>18</sup>. Where relevant and appropriate, reference is made to them. However the recommendations that follow are the product of this particular piece of work; with the agreement of our Steering Group, they have not been materially changed in the light of the recently-published consultation documents.

### **“Integrated thinking” and “thinking coastal” – and doing it rigorously across different time horizons**

5.6 Our first group of recommendations is concerned – one way or another – with raising the profile and improving the understanding of coastal issues, and ensuring that decision-making processes – at local, regional and national scales – are “thinking coastal” in a manner that is robust and consistent with better governance. Within this first group of recommendations,

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<sup>18</sup> Consultation paper on a new planning policy on *Development and coastal change*, Communities and Local Government, July 2009; and *Consultation on Coastal Change Policy*, Defra, June 2009

some are very specific and others much more generic, but across the board, the intention is to equip more decision-makers better, such that better decisions can be made. There are six specific recommendations within this group. All six are important as part of the mix<sup>19</sup>.

### **Recommendation 1: Leadership**

- 5.7 In “thinking coastal” – and doing so in an informed way and with a long term vantage point – issues relating to leadership are absolutely crucial. In this domain, there are currently some major challenges. The main body responsible for leading on flood risk and coastal risk management, the Environment Agency, neither has the statutory or financial powers to fully direct local action or the local and democratic legitimacy that would allow it to operate through established delivery mechanisms such as the local planning process. The ‘leadership’ role may therefore be detached from the heart of where local decisions are made and implemented. Conversely, District Councils are widely regarded as having a vital leadership role (locally, sub-regionally, regionally and nationally) but would regard themselves as being at the fringes in terms of their power to influence central government and in terms of their financial capabilities. Moreover although local authorities generally wish to have more say in coastal decision making and are well placed to understand the management issues, they will often find it difficult to make ‘technical’ or long term decisions (about coastal protection for example) when local politics favours more popular choices or short-term priorities. **Issues relating to leadership in terms of coastal governance therefore need to be resolved – particularly given that the clear imperative is to “think coastal” over the short, medium and long terms.**
- 5.8 The importance of leadership is especially pronounced where there are ‘totemic’ issues which, unless resolved, create a log-jam that prevents coastal management from evolving. The current failure to deal adequately with communities directly threatened with coastal erosion is an example. Until this is resolved, it will be impossible to move forward constructively with changes to policy (away from “hold-the-line” for example).
- 5.9 Similarly, there are ‘lurking’ issues. We could, for example, consider the (hypothetical) possibility that – at some point in the future – Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft becomes an island (as the two towns are defended but the coastline in adjacent areas is not). Currently issues of this type are barely raised and far less planned for. This occurs when the *status quo* is assumed to be forever, even when an objective and far-sighted look might reveal that this is not the case.
- 5.10 **It would be helpful if a number of these ‘totemic’, ‘lurking’ and ‘unthinkable’ issues were singled out and addressed as a way of starting to ease the log-jam. This could be approached as an action research project which provided lessons on how these sticky issues can be resolved, and what is required in the way of governance to do so.**

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<sup>19</sup> Insofar as this cluster of recommendations applies at a local level, then the contents of Defra’s *Consultation on Coastal Policy Change* are potentially helpful. Defra sets out its ideas for how coastal communities can successfully adapt to the impacts of coastal change and government’s role in supporting this. Specifically it invites pathfinder local authorities to bid into a new Coastal Change Fund. At a local level, many of the “think coastal” recommendations outlined here could in principle be moved forward through this route

**Recommendation 2: Supporting local engagement and capacity building, and participatory approaches to coastal management**

- 5.11 Key to greater awareness at a local level is the process of local engagement. From our consultations, we are fully aware that the process of engagement takes time and resources. **The Coastal Initiative could usefully support local/public engagement and it could also promote participatory approaches to coastal management.** Our research found that where this is taking place, it can be effective – but it is patchy in all three areas and entirely absent from some. Moving forward, capacity building is required for both local communities and the organisations working within them.

**Recommendation 3: Developing an overall vision for coastal governance**

- 5.12 Alongside clear leadership, processes of supporting both local engagement and capacity building, and participatory approaches to coastal management, need to be part of a wider overall vision in relation to coastal governance and sustainable coastal communities. What is striking about the current situation is the lack of understanding of “*who does what*” and the persistence of the view that “*I wouldn’t start from here*” in terms of existing governance arrangements. Yet despite dissatisfaction with the current arrangements there appears to be an absence of radical alternatives (consistently proposed), coupled with a belief that impending policy-led reforms (e.g. the Marine Bill and creation of the Marine Management Organisation) are unlikely to bring about radical change (i.e. the current situation of ‘muddling through’ (involving a reliance on pragmatism and relationships, rather than formal powers and structures) is likely to remain and is not fundamentally challenged).
- 5.13 In response, **the Coastal Initiative could be a mechanism for developing an overall ‘vision’ for coastal governance. This should build as appropriate on the principles of ICZM** (and taking on board the findings from the on-going work of the Suffolk Coast Integrated Coastal Zone Management Initiative (focused on the Alde and Ore)).

**Recommendation 4: Mainstreaming**

- 5.14 As a cross-cutting issue, our study found that coastal management suffers from not quite being able to find its correct ‘place’ amongst other agendas. To an extent, it has its own dedicated set of strategies, plans and institutions but by themselves these are not sufficient to generate the necessary influence, powers or resources to respond to the substantial challenges presented by, for example, some Shoreline Management Plans. **There is a need to ‘mainstream’ coastal issues into wider (and more powerful) governance and funding arrangements<sup>20</sup>.**
- 5.15 There is widespread reference to coastal issues in regional and national strategies, so in a sense the door is open. But the lack of practical measures in the operational documents underneath these strategies suggests that coastal issues are not yet embedded in a practical, as

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<sup>20</sup> The contents of a consultation paper on a new planning policy on *Development and Coastal Change* which was published by CLG in July 2009 should be helpful in this regard. This states that coastal change impacts must be considered alongside the raft of other objectives and integrated effectively into strategies and plans for the coast. Specifically “*spatial policies to support the delivery of regeneration and sustainable economic growth for coastal areas should take account of physical processes affecting the coast and decisions regarding the planning and management of coastal defences*” (page 8)

well as rhetorical, sense. There may therefore potentially be a benefit in taking coastal management issues out of a 'specialist and isolated' category and taking steps to insert them into mainstream policy and funding streams.

- 5.16 In taking this recommendation forward, we would suggest that real attention is given to the successes and failures linked to mainstreaming other policy and delivery priorities. For example, the desire to mainstream rural delivery was a central theme within Defra's Rural Strategy (2004) and there is an emerging body of evidence with regard to its effectiveness.

#### ***Recommendation 5: Raising awareness***

- 5.17 As part of the mainstreaming process, simply raising awareness of coastal issues remains an overarching priority – and it was highlighted as such during our case study consultations. The review of strategies and plans illustrated how coastal issues rarely appear amongst strategic priorities and the consultations revealed how, even in a place such as North Norfolk, coastal issues can be marginal. **There is a need to raise the profile of coastal issues amongst other agendas, and consequently encourage more progress and flexibility in the development of policy.** Raising awareness – at national, regional and local levels – is a prerequisite in relation to many of the recommendations presented here.

#### ***Recommendation 6: Promoting a science-literate and science-informed perspective within wider approaches to coastal governance***

- 5.18 In some respects, our sixth recommendation sits rather oddly with those that precede it, but we think it is a very important part of the mix.
- 5.19 The situation with coastal management is analogous to the wider climate change debate in that there is a need for an informed and thoughtful engagement with science. As with climate change, the science of coastal change and the resulting scenarios used to develop policy documents such as SMPs is complex, uncertain and contested. Like climate change however, there is a need to establish the principle that action needs to be taken on the best available science when the costs or consequences of not acting loom large. This principle appears not to be embedded fully within coastal policy and planning.
- 5.20 In response, **it would be helpful if documents like SMPs presented more clearly how the best available science – and the consequences of this for coastal communities and environments – had been used to inform the debate and associated policy choices. More generally, this would mean a greater understanding of the risks of action (and non-action) and a more informed approach in moving forward. In addition, decision-makers should be prepared to explain how the science has been used and, where necessary, engage scientists in explaining the scientific evidence to communities and other stakeholders in coastal areas.** In "thinking coastal" and "thinking long term", a science-literate and science-informed perspective within processes of coastal governance is very important<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Note that the consultation paper on a new planning policy on *Development and Coastal Change* published by CLG in July 2009 emphasises the need for an agreed evidence base on coastal change. This needs to include coastal erosion and projected sea-level rise as well as the intensity, severity and frequency of coastal storms

## Developing an holistic approach to long term delivery and funding issues – and one that spans marine and terrestrial planning

- 5.21 Our second cluster of recommendations is – in some respects – a sub-set of the first. Its focus is specifically on issues relating to delivery in coastal areas and the steps that need to be taken to align decisions with regard to the use of resources in a manner that is both optimal over the short, medium and long terms, and integrated across the interface between marine and terrestrial planning. Three specific recommendations follow.

### ***Recommendation 7: Delivery planning: “Integrated Development Programmes” for coastal areas?***

- 5.22 The criticism of SMPs (as documents that create a policy without enabling the means to deliver it) points to a missing link, or gap, in the decision-making chain from strategic policy to practical plans. It appears to be not only the planning of practical actions that is missing, but also agreement at the SMP level or above on who needs to lead the planning and delivery of these actions, what powers and resources they need and how the (SMP) steering group plus regional/national partners should work together to enable this. **In local areas, a delivery plan that sits between the relevant SMP and LDF or other operational plans is required<sup>22</sup>.**
- 5.23 However this specific finding and recommendation can also be considered more generally. The disjuncture in relation to SMPs is symptomatic of a more general misalignment between funding decisions across different policy areas and intervention categories. This problem is not specific to coastal areas. Across the “Engines of Growth” within the East of England, the delivery of sustainable housing and jobs growth has been challenging in part because individual funding decisions are taken in isolation and in a manner that is not properly planned or programmed across the piece. A response in many of the “Engines of Growth” has been Integrated Development Programmes. These are phased, resourced, costed and prioritised capital delivery plans which have been prepared by local partners in response to the whole range of locally applicable commitments and targets set out in the East of England Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy. **A similar kind of approach – albeit one that engages more fulsomely with the investment requirements linked to natural environmental assets and processes, and with the marine environment – could be considered in relation to coastal areas<sup>23</sup>.**

### ***Recommendation 8: Funding mechanisms and processes***

- 5.24 Funding often acts as a log jam. Our consultations suggested that the thinking and organisation of funding for coastal management appears to be rather inflexible and unimaginative. For example, where a policy shifts from ‘hold the line’ to ‘managed retreat’, there is no mechanism for the funds (or a proportion) that would otherwise have gone to

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<sup>22</sup> We understand that this is what the coastal management strategy currently being prepared by North Norfolk District Council is seeking to achieve

<sup>23</sup> An Integrated Development Programme has been prepared for Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft. This pays a good deal of attention to issues relating to tidal flood risk, etc. However it is shaped by the terrestrial planning regime within which it sits. Hence it does not really consider the need for – or consequences of – investment in the marine environment

defence to be ring-fenced for helping areas to adapt to the consequences. Government-backed 'buy and lease' schemes are another example of a potential funding mechanism that could allow economic development to continue in areas blighted by erosion or flood risk.

- 5.25 There are other flaws in funding processes which are symptomatic of the challenges of coastal governance. For example, if an offshore renewable energy facility was located on land, it would fall within the jurisdiction of local planning processes through which there would be accountability to local elected members and hence to local people<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, as a sizeable commercial venture gaining commercial value from – effectively – a "land" designation, some level of developer contribution would be negotiated (through a Section 106 agreement). This in turn would help to fund local supporting infrastructure – whether that be an access road, additional affordable housing, social and community facilities, or whatever. But with the offshore development on the seaward side of the mean low water mark, it is not clear that any mechanism currently exists to extract contributions of this nature<sup>25</sup>. Yet this ought – arguably – to be a part of sustainable governance in coastal communities<sup>26</sup>.
- 5.26 In terms of funding, the disconnect goes further and deeper: at a strategic level, there appears to be no mechanism for ensuring that investment in infrastructure in the marine environment is a catalyst for – or even a material consideration in relation to – on-shore transport prioritisation. At a regional scale, this is particularly apparent. With regard to transport, the East of England's 2009 Regional Funding Advice was informed by a regional prioritisation exercise that was in turn informed by the Stern Report and the Government's response to it<sup>27</sup>; the Eddington Transport Study; and the Government's five goals for transport as outlined in the DfT's 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' (DaSTS) strategy. This is not a "bad" basis for prioritisation in the context of very limited resources; but it provides no real scope for an interface with regard to major new capital investments in the marine environment.
- 5.27 **The issues with regard to mechanisms for, and sources of, funding in relation to coastal management are complicated. A thorough review could usefully be initiated by the Coastal Initiative. More specifically, questions could usefully be asked in relation to emerging prioritisation arrangements for the Regional Infrastructure Fund, and the detailed development and implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.**

***Recommendation 9: Developing a language of "net present values" in relation to the management of the coast: Learning from Stern***

- 5.28 In 2006, HM Treasury published the Stern Review Report on the *Economics of Climate Change*. Stern's central thesis was based on the economics of climate change, and the

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<sup>24</sup> Note that PPS22 (Renewable Energy) is remarkably dismissive in relation to offshore renewables. It simply states that "as the land use planning system does not extend offshore, the policies do not apply to developments for offshore renewables". Within PPS22, no further reference to offshore renewables is provided

<sup>25</sup> A consultation paper on a new planning policy on *Development and Coastal Change* was published by CLG in July 2009. This proposes that planning authorities should define "coastal change management areas" and that when preparing plans in relation to CCMAAs, planning authorities should "have regard to" the contents of the marine policy statement and the contents of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill. However there is no reference to securing offshore "developer" contributions as part of this process

<sup>26</sup> Note that the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) will be the planning authority for certain types of projects, including offshore proposals over 100MW

<sup>27</sup> See *Towards a Sustainable Transport System: Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World* (TaSTS), Department for Transport, 2008

surrounding (financial) costs and benefits, not least in relation to the Exchequer. Through Stern the debate shifted from the environmental fringes in terms of policy making to what is perceived as the mainstream. The implications have been substantial and there are lessons in terms of coastal management and the investment processes linked to it.

- 5.29 **Specifically, there is a strong case for estimating in financial terms the long term costs and benefits linked to coastal management and using this as one tool to inform investment priorities.** This process would be complicated. It would need to involve rigorous and quantified estimates of net present values, etc., in relation to key decisions that have to be taken and investments that have to be made at some point (but not necessarily now). It should also take account of ecosystems services and the values that might be attached to these.
- 5.30 This process of attaching monetary values would allow some basis for estimating the long term consequences of not taking action now. Most importantly, it would provide a mechanism (albeit imperfect) for making more informed investment decisions across process timescales that are chronically misaligned. Currently, there is a fundamental tension or gap in perspectives which is created by time-scales: short term strategies (and spending plans) focus on immediate socio-economic issues whereas long-term plans focus more on climate change, flooding and coastal erosion.

### Managing the effects of key policy changes

- 5.31 The coast is dynamic and the consequence is that – from time to time – there will need to be significant policy changes in response. It is in this context that governance processes bite hardest. Two recommendations follow.

***Recommendation 10: Key decisions with regard to coastal management need to be recognised as “nationally significant”***

- 5.32 **Some coastal decisions, such as a change from ‘hold-the line’, can be of national significance and their consequences should therefore be considered at a national level.** Under these circumstances, there is a need for particular support to – and capacity for – day-to-day processes of governance (and in this context, many of the recommendations set out above are particularly important). Moreover, the contents of CLG’s current consultation paper on *“Development and coastal change”* – and the guidance which will follow to accompany the new National Planning Policy – should be helpful.
- 5.33 In some respects, this proposal creates an immediate challenge to extant governance processes. However the argument is not that national processes should ride rough-shod over more locally-determined ones; rather that there needs to be a real and informed engagement and dialogue (in both directions) between the two. In facilitating this process, the recommendations made earlier in the context of “thinking coastal” would have particular currency.

**Recommendation 11: Establishing principles for when policies change**

- 5.34 Given that coastal change is an evolving and uncertain process, changes in policy are inevitable (e.g. from "hold the line" to "managed retreat" and perhaps back again). However, there do not appear to be established or consistent principles that would be applied for managing the consequences of policy change. During our case studies, the contrast was drawn between coastal communities faced with the need to move homes and those affected by a third runway at Heathrow Airport (where it is said that a principle of compensation exists).
- 5.35 **To inform the development of a compensation principle/policy, work should be undertaken to assess more accurately the level of impact and cost of compensation that might be applicable.** For example, the actual numbers affected by coastal erosion (on different timescales) are not obvious from the literature but will be limited to certain geographical areas. They will also be limited temporally, in the obvious sense that more people will be affected as time goes on, but also in the sense that issues such as compensation could be limited to a relatively short window of time. For example, there appears to be a valid argument for compensating people affected by a change of policy, but once that policy has been changed and announced, it should be expected that property markets, insurance markets and other mechanisms will communicate the risk to investors and the public need no longer underwrite that risk<sup>28</sup>.

**Approaching the revisions to the East of England Plan – the Regional Spatial Strategy**

- 5.36 Many of the recommendations set out above have implications – directly or indirectly – for the review of RSS; they ought to be taken into account in that context. With regard to the RSS review itself, three further recommendations are important.

**Recommendation 12: Planning for changes to existing development**

- 5.37 The focus of the East of England Plan currently – as indeed of all RSSs – is overwhelmingly on planning for new development (and, in particular, the provision of 508,000 net additional homes). However in some coastal areas (notably North Norfolk), there is an urgent need for long-term planning in relation to existing development. **Through its review, the Regional Spatial Strategy should provide a genuine steer in terms of planning for existing coastal settlements in the context of dynamic coastal environments over the period of the revised Plan (to 2031)<sup>29</sup>.**

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<sup>28</sup> Note that issues relating to the management of coastal change are the subject of a (currently ongoing) Defra consultation and hence elements of this recommendation are already being taken forward. In its document *Consultation on Coastal Policy Change*, Defra sets out its ideas for how coastal communities can successfully adapt to the impacts of coastal change and government's role in supporting this. There are two main elements to the proposals: the formation of a Coastal Change Fund to support communities in planning for and adapting to climate change (bids are being invited from local authorities with an interest in becoming pathfinders); and a coastal erosion assistance package offering support to homeowners if residential properties are lost as a result of coastal erosion

<sup>29</sup> This recommendation is wholly consistent with the contents of a consultation paper on a new planning policy on *Development and Coastal Change* which was published by CLG in July 2009. This proposes that RSSs and LDFs should promote policies to assist the relocation of development affected by coastal change away from areas at risk

**Recommendation 13: Addressing the disjunction between Policy SS9 and “the rest” of the East of England Plan**

- 5.38 In the East of England Plan currently, Policy SS9 is concerned with “The Coast”. As a stand-alone policy statement, it is useful. However there is no steer as to the fit between Policy SS9 and “the rest” of the Plan.
- 5.39 The tension is particularly stark in the context of Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft. Both towns are on the coast and therefore Policy SS9 is relevant in terms of planning for the two areas’ medium term futures. But the East of England Plan also identifies both as Key Centres for Development and Change (Policy SS3 and Policy GYL1); as Priority Areas for Regeneration (Policy SS5); as major town centres (Policy E5); and as Regional Transport Nodes (Policy T5). The conditions that allow all of these policies to be compatible ought to be articulated in RSS.
- 5.40 **In the review of RSS, consideration should be given to issues of consistency and coherence across different policies which apply to coastal areas. Where there are tensions – or even outright conflicts – advice ought to be provided in terms of how these are resolved.**

**Recommendation 14: Treating 2031 as a staging post – not as the end of the Plan period**

- 5.41 Finally, the timescale to which the RSS review relates is from 2021 (the end of the current Plan period) to 2031. Across the case study areas, the timescale to which Shoreline Management Plans relate is extremely important, and it is much longer. With this longer term perspective in mind, 2031 should be treated as a staging post, not an end point. **The Plan ought to be revised in a way that is consistent with this longer term perspective.**
- 5.42 In itself this will present challenges as levels of uncertainty will increase substantially. Two consequences follow (both of which are further recommendations):
- **more use should be made of long term scenario planning in both developing the Plan and, to a degree, monitoring its implementation**
  - **the Plan should be clear as to how it intends to use science well and, specifically, to respond to changing knowledge and understanding with regard to coastal management. The science is complicated and is moving quickly. Policies within the Plan need to be capable of being adapted intelligently (particularly in implementation) in response.**

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## **PART B: SITUATIONAL ANALYSES**

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## 6: Blackwater Estuary

### Background

- 6.1 The Blackwater Estuary is a 23 kilometre long tidal estuary on the coast of Essex. For the purposes of this study it has been defined as the area from Sales Point to Colne Point taking in both the Blackwater and the mouth of the Colne Estuary.

Figure 6-1 : The Blackwater Estuary



Source: Blackwater Estuary Management Plan

- 6.2 The Blackwater Estuary is within the Local Authority Districts of Maldon and Colchester. The two main towns on the estuary are Maldon, which has a population of 14,034<sup>30</sup> and West Mersea, which has a population of 6,925<sup>31</sup>.
- 6.3 The area is surrounded by growth areas and growth points with the Thames Gateway to the south, the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough to the west and Haven Gateway to the north east. So it is proximate to number of areas of large scale growth, but is not expected to accommodate significant growth itself. However, the area has experienced a considerable growth in population in the past 20 years with its population increasing by 28% since 1985 (twice the rate of growth of Essex and four times the national average)<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Census 2001

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Maldon Sustainable Communities Strategy, 2008

- 6.4 The Blackwater Estuary is an extremely significant location for nature conservation in the UK, with a wealth of designations including Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserve (NNR), Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which take in the whole coastal fringe<sup>33</sup>.
- 6.5 The estuary has been changing since the route of the proto Thames was altered by the ice sheet around 450 thousand years ago. Subsequently it has been significantly affected by the reclamation of the inter-tidal area which started with the Romans and continued to its peak in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The resulting estuary channels are narrower and deeper than would be expected for a natural stable channel and it is subject to both natural (caused by the unusually narrow mouth of the estuary) and artificial (caused by existing sea defences) ‘coastal squeeze’ whereby the landward transgression of inter-tidal areas is blocked by flood embankment resulting in the loss of inter-tidal areas<sup>34</sup>. Most of the land around the Blackwater Estuary is low lying and like the rest of the south and east of England, sinking as a result of post-glacial rebound<sup>35</sup>, by around 2mm per year. In addition the sea level is rising as a result of global warming by around 4mm per year.
- 6.6 In summary, the Blackwater Estuary we see today is a dynamic environment, the result of natural and man made changes to the environment and subject to change as a result of further environmental changes to come. Priorities for nature conservation and the vision for Blackwater need to be set in that context.

## I: Key elements of the policy context

- 6.7 An overview of the key policy documents, which are both an input to and a product of decision-making, relevant to the Blackwater Estuary is set out in Table 6 -1. The overview includes overarching or cross cutting strategies and a range of subject specific strategies. The subject specific strategies were identified in relation to five “lenses”;
- flood risk and coastal defence
  - housing and affordable housing
  - transport infrastructure
  - environmental asset management
  - economic development and regeneration.
- 6.8 These five lenses were identified as the ones most likely to reveal some of the most interesting and challenging issues in relation to governance arrangements and decision-making because of the dependencies and inter-relationships between them.

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<sup>33</sup> Blackwater Estuary Management Plan, 1996

<sup>34</sup> The Essex and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan, 2002

<sup>35</sup> Post-glacial rebound is the rise in land masses that were pressed down under the ice-sheet 10-15 thousand years ago, in the UK as Scotland and the north of England rise the south and east of England sink.

**Table 6 -1: Key Strategies and Plans of relevance to governance issues in the Blackwater Estuary**

<b>Lens</b>	<b>Sub-Regional/ Local Strategies</b>	<b>Regional Strategies</b>	<b>National Strategies</b>
Cross-Cutting	<p>A vision for our future, Colchester Community Strategy (2003) – currently being reviewed</p> <p>Facing the future, Maldon Sustainable Community Strategy (2008)</p> <p>Essex Local Area Agreement (2006)</p> <p>Colchester Core Spatial Strategy (2008)</p> <p>Maldon Core Spatial Strategy: consultation draft (2009)</p> <p>Blackwater Estuary Management Plan (1996)</p>	<p>East of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy</p> <p>Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England</p> <p>Inventing our Future – Regional Economic Strategy</p>	<p>Planning Policy Statements and Guidance</p> <p>Planning Circulars</p> <p>Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy</p> <p>A strategy for promoting an integrated approach to the management of coastal areas in England (Defra, 2007)</p> <p>Marine and Coastal Access Bill (currently going through parliament), including provision for Marine Policy Statements and formation of Marine Management Organisation</p>
Flood risk and coastal defence	<p>Essex Shoreline Management Plan (1997) – currently being reviewed</p>		<p>Floods and Water Management Bill (currently a draft – provisions include a requirement for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (which should add democratic input))</p>
Housing and affordable housing	<p>Requirements set out in the relevant core strategies</p>	<p>Regional Housing Strategy 2005 -10</p>	<p>Sustainable Communities Plan, 2003 (then-ODPM)</p> <p>Strong and Prosperous Communities, 2006 – Local Government White Paper</p> <p>Housing Green Paper, 2007</p>
Transport infrastructure	<p>Requirements set out in the relevant core strategies</p>	<p>Regional Transport Strategy (included in East of England Plan)</p>	<p>Towards a Sustainable Transport System, 2007, and Delivering a Sustainable Transport System, 2008; these will be supported by National Policy Statements</p>
Environment asset management	<p>The Essex and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan (CHaMPs) (2002)</p>		<p>Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England – England Biodiversity Strategy</p>
Economic development and regeneration	<p>Requirements set out in the relevant core strategies</p>		<p>DECC Nuclear white paper: 'meeting the energy challenge' (2008)</p>

Source: SQW Consulting

### **Review of the overarching local strategies and plans**

- 6.9 The sustainable community strategies, associated local area agreements, local development frameworks and the relevant Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) for Maldon and Colchester provide the most holistic overarching statement of priorities for the Blackwater Estuary. They have however all been produced at different times and with different remits so fall some way short of providing a coherent and comprehensive statement for the area. Despite this, a review of what they say, and what they do not say and how they relate to one another is an important starting point for our examination of governance processes.

#### *Sustainable Community Strategies*

- 6.10 The sustainable community strategies relevant to the Blackwater Estuary are for Maldon and Colchester. They are linked to the Essex county LAA performance framework but they set out locally specific priorities.
- 6.11 The **Colchester Community Strategy** (2003) is most revealing in its lack of coverage of issues that relate to the Colne estuary and the coast. In many ways it is not that surprising. Colchester's Community Strategy was a precursor to the fuller Sustainable Community Strategies and is a high level and relatively short document which does not cover many of the Borough's priorities in detail let alone coastal priorities. Also the Community Strategy is a statement of the priorities for the whole district of which the estuary and coast make up a relatively small part.
- 6.12 The strategy does highlight the coastline amongst the things most valued by residents of the borough. As a consequence, one of the themes emerging from the strategy is the aim of developing Colchester as "*a prestigious regional centre with a contemporary look and feel in a way that brings out the best of the unique heritage, coast and countryside*". However, this is only explicitly carried forward in a commitment to high air, river and coastal quality in the borough<sup>36</sup>.
- 6.13 The **Maldon Sustainable Community Strategy** (2008) is a much more recent community strategy and provides a more complete statement of the priorities for the area. Coastal issues are also covered more fully because the estuary is a much bigger factor in the district's composition: the district is wrapped around the estuary so coastal issues are literally at its centre, while the main towns of Maldon and neighbouring area of Heybridge are located on its banks.
- 6.14 The estuary and the coast define the district and the whole area has strong associations with fishing, coastal trading and more recently sailing. The district is an attractive and popular place to live, attracting couples and young families from Chelmsford and Greater London. Despite this, like many coastal towns, its population is ageing and by 2016 it is predicted that 53% of the population will be aged over 60. The strategy also highlights flooding as a major

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<sup>36</sup> The only other estuarine or coastal elements to the strategy are found within the plans for the regeneration of East Colchester. These include proposals for a tidal barrier to retain high water in the river and create an improved waterside location for development planned in the Hythe part of the city and a maritime centre as part of the regeneration plans for the area. Both of these fall outside of the area for this study but illustrate the relatively limited way in which estuarine and coastal issues are included in the strategy

issue because so much of the district is low lying and a serious flood would inundate large swathes of land, including the principal industrial area at the Causeway in Heybridge, residential areas in Heybridge and Mayland.

- 6.15 The sustainable community strategy covers the issues any local strategic partnership has to deal with anywhere but the vision of the Maldon Sustainable Community Strategy is linked to the coastal environment and the river. Specifically the vision is for, *“a sustainable coastal district, with a rich rural identity and heritage, underpinned by a vibrant local economy and active community life.”*
- 6.16 Within that vision, the strategy emphasises that the coastal district with two estuaries should have a high quality built environment and landscape, protect and enhance both rural and urban environments wherever and whenever possible, and maximise opportunities for leisure at the coast. The themes and priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy are summarised in Table 6-2. Although many of them are not particularly coastal in nature the challenges of addressing them is influenced by the coastal context.

Table 6-2: Sustainable Community Strategy: Key themes and priorities	
<p><b>1. Taking pride in ourselves</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve the health and well-being of residents</li> <li>• To strengthen and encourage opportunities that will sustain and develop active communities with strong community spirit</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Taking pride in our communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make the Maldon District a safer place</li> <li>• To increase the supply of affordable housing</li> <li>• To improve and sustain transport and access to services and facilities in rural areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Taking pride in our local economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote a diverse, sustainable and vibrant local economy</li> <li>• To continue to raise educational attainment and skills levels</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Taking pride in our rural and coastal heritage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect and enhance the distinctive environment of the district and encourage enjoyment of it</li> </ul>

*Source: Maldon Sustainable Community Strategy (2008)*

- 6.17 Within the Sustainable Community Strategy, the economy theme highlights barriers to development such as poor infrastructure, poor access to broadband, low skills and limited suitable premises. Poor infrastructure – road, rail, and broadband – is a characteristic of many remote rural areas but is particularly prevalent in coastal areas as they are typically ‘the end of the line’. The limited supply of suitable premises in the Blackwater does have a particular coastal dimension. The current main premises in the Causeway Area of Heybridge - apart from being an older and poor quality industrial area - is located in an area of high flood risk. And Maldon District Council is in discussion with the Environment Agency with regard to the regeneration of the area.
- 6.18 Within the local economy theme, the strategy also recognises the challenge of balancing the demands of rural tourism and rural business diversification with sustainable land management practices and the protection and enhancement of the area’s environmental assets.
- 6.19 The biggest potential impact on the local economy would be a new nuclear power station at Bradwell. The development is broadly welcomed because of the positive economic impact but it is acknowledged it would radically increase demand for accommodation, services and skilled workers, in addition to placing a strain on infrastructure particularly during the construction phase. And because of the relatively low skills of the workforce, particularly

those of young people, local benefits might be limited. Even when skilled labour is available, the scale of the contracts may mean local firms can not access them.

- 6.20 Finally, the priority most focused on the coastal environment, alongside the responsibility to reduce its own environmental impact, it addresses the district's response to climate change through work to minimise the harmful effects of flooding (including the development of Community Flood Plans) and working with land owners and local communities on how to adapt to the effects of climate change. The strategy acknowledges a balance needs to be sought between protecting homes and employment sites by creating or improving flood defences and protecting the natural environment which could be detrimentally affected by such defences.

*Local development framework – core strategies*

- 6.21 Alongside the Sustainable Community Strategies, the local development frameworks represent another overarching statement of community priorities. Although they are focused on development as opposed to the issues of existing communities, their statutory nature and rigorous production requirements ensure they should provide pretty comprehensive coverage of the issues for the local area.
- 6.22 The **Colchester Core Strategy** (2008) reflects the regional planning priorities which identify Colchester as a Key Centre for Development and Change and a priority area for regeneration. Colchester is therefore a focus for the new homes and jobs planned for the Essex Haven Gateway. In general, the Borough is defined in terms of its urban centre, Colchester, and as a gateway location because of its proximity to the ports of Harwich and Felixstowe (as well as Stansted airport. It also states that West Mersea, located in the Blackwater Estuary, as one of the main settlements outside Colchester, will accommodate a share of 1,600 new homes in the period to 2021 of which 35% should be affordable. As well as new homes, the town of West Mersea should provide shops and services to its surrounding rural hinterland.
- 6.23 Since the Core Strategy is focused on development, and that development is focused on the existing urban areas, it does not say a great deal about the Borough's coastal location. But it does aim to conserve the Borough's natural and historic environment, countryside and coastline in order to protect its history, archaeology, geology and biodiversity. The green corridor that is provided by the River Colne and the town's ecologically rich rural and coastal surroundings (including the seafaring communities of Wivenhoe and Mersea) are highlighted.
- 6.24 The key issues for Colchester are similarly not particularly coastal in nature. Those with some relevance are linked to sustainability, flood risk and access problems associated with peripherality as set out in Table 6-3.

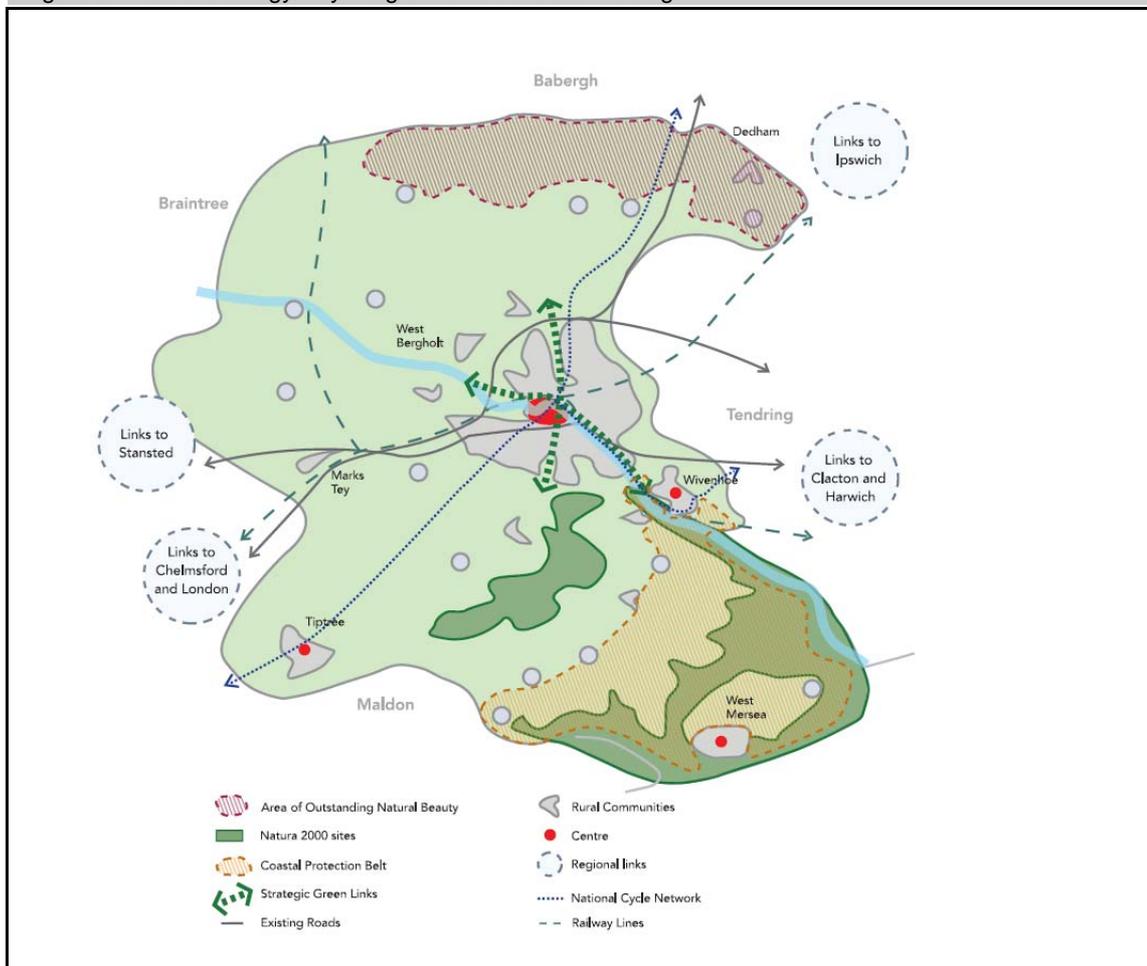
Table 6-3: Relevant key issues in the Colchester Core Spatial Strategy

Sustainability	Current problems: Increasing impact of climate change on the environment, particularly following and the Borough’s coastline, and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Managing Growth Pressures	Future Challenges: Mitigation of flood risk and contaminated land
Improving Accessibility	Current problem: Lack of access and connectivity between different parts of the Borough, particularly to and within the town centre  Future Challenge: Improving access in rural areas to jobs and services

Source: Colchester Core Spatial Strategy

6.25 The Core Strategy’s key diagram (see Figure 6-2), shows the Borough’s Natura 2000 sites and the Coastal Protection Belt.

Figure 6-2: Core Strategy Key Diagram of Colchester Borough



Source: Colchester Core Strategy

6.26 The countryside and coastal area provide important agricultural, tourism and recreational opportunities that support local economies and communities. In addition there is a statutory obligation under the Habitats Directive to protect important habitats and species designated as Natura 2000 sites which protect the undeveloped areas of the Colne Estuary and coast and support regeneration that enhances the river’s recreation and nature conservation values. The

Coastal Protection Belt is an additional county wide designation that protects the sensitive character of the undeveloped coastline which could be harmed by development that might otherwise be acceptable in a countryside area. This limits development and increases the requirement for green infrastructure to alleviate the pressure on designated sites and to provide a network of green corridors and sites to cope with climate change. This underlines the importance of green infrastructure in an area vulnerable to sea level rise to aid the dispersal of species if climate change renders existing habitats unsuitable. But no similar policy or transition plan exists in relation to residences and businesses located along the coast to help manage their ability to respond to climate change.

- 6.27 Development will be directed away from land at risk of fluvial or coastal flooding in accordance with PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk), including areas where risk of flooding is likely to increase as a result of climate change. And when development does take place in these areas, it should include measures to alleviate risk to people and property. Again this leaves a policy gap in relation to existing communities at flood risk.
- 6.28 The **Maldon Core Strategy** is under development and that work is ongoing and set in the context of national policy. Those planning policy statements that have particular relevance from a coastal perspective include; the allocation of a rolling five year supply of housing sites (PPS 3); identification of land for a further 10 years to enable 15 years total supply (PPS3); evidence of what physical, social, and green infrastructure requirement to enable the amount of development proposed taking account of its type and distribution (PPS12); the role of sport and recreation in underpinning people's quality of life (PPG17); sequential risk based approach to the location of development taking account of flood risk (PPS25).
- 6.29 There are no specific requirements on Maldon District because it is not a designated growth area but the general requirements include
- housing – to provide for 2,400 new homes to 2021 of which 35% should be affordable
  - prosperity – to contribute to the indicative jobs growth target for Essex and the sustainable investment in the maintenance, improvement, regeneration, extension and diversification of the region's tourist industry
  - built and natural heritage – ensure areas of green infrastructure (including protected sites and nature reserves) are identified and managed; provide an integrated approach to the coast and coastal management; identify, preserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment; and protect from development likely to cause harm. Plus, the strategy should ensure that new development will have a minimum impact upon biodiversity and earth heritage, and when appropriate, achieve net environmental gains
  - accessibility – priority to provide sustainable access from villages and other rural settlements to market towns and urban areas
  - people and communities – ensuring new development fulfils the principle of sustainable communities and is supported by social and green infrastructure,

supporting the role of cultural assets in view of the District's rich coastal and rural heritage.

- 6.30 In addition, the Core Strategy was developed in reference to issues raised in public consultations. These included
- no development on the flood plain
  - to investigate fully the viability, practicality and cost of retaining the Causeway area.
- 6.31 Although Maldon is not designated as a growth area, it is subject to significant growth pressures. Its population has grown faster than regional or national averages and growth is expected to continue. The challenges for the district are characterised as 'subtle' since it has to address the significant impact on the areas that result from the from infrastructure investment and growth in the neighbouring Haven Gateway, Thames Gateway and Chelmsford growth point.
- 6.32 The biggest impact on the local economy is acknowledged to be the decision on the next generation of nuclear power stations – sites that are considered suitable will be set out in a new National Planning Policy Statement – until then any such development proposal is outside the scope of the Core Strategy and should a decision be taken that Maldon is suitable, a topic review of the Core Strategy may be required.
- 6.33 The overall sense from the developing core strategy is that Maldon is a place that will be subject to the impact of developments that happen in and around it. Decisions on those developments are likely to happen outside the district itself. In addition, flood risk and coastal change are likely to be central to the strategy given that the major existing settlements are the focus for development, and the area has a high concentration of designated sites and areas of flood risk.

#### *Shoreline Management Plan*

- 6.34 The final overarching statement for the Blackwater Estuary is the **Essex Shoreline Management Plan**<sup>37</sup>. It is one of a number of management plans that affect the coast, but since it sets the priorities for long term strategic planning for coastal defence, the SMP is overarching in its implications. The decision to defend or not to defend a stretch of coastline affects so many other decisions that it assumes a high level of importance for the local area.
- 6.35 The current shoreline management plan for the Blackwater Estuary, the Essex SMP, is over ten years old. It extends from Mardyke in the Thames Estuary to River Stour. The relevant elements for the Blackwater Estuary are coastal units 5 and 6 which cover Sales Point to East Mersea and East Mersea to Colne Point respectively.
- 6.36 The Coastal defence policy for Management Units 5 and 6 was, in the short term (defined as up to 10 years) to hold the existing defence line whilst initiating extensive monitoring and modelling. This monitoring and modelling should investigate the various coastal defence options of do nothing, hold the line, advance the line and retreat the line.

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<sup>37</sup> Essex Shoreline Management Plan, 1997, LG Mouchel & Partners Ltd

- 6.37 In the longer term, the policy for units 5 and 6 is to
- hold the line in defined areas
  - implement the preferred option (do nothing, hold the line, advance the line, retreat the line) on the basis of the results of monitoring, modelling and economic evaluation.
- 6.38 Managed set back would only be undertaken where it could be demonstrated that this was the only sustainable defence policy and that it would produce a more sustainable estuary morphology.
- 6.39 The SMP is now out of the short term 'hold the line' period, and in the longer term period where options should be reviewed. The new coastal defence policy for the Estuary will be set in the new SMP currently being developed in a process led by the Environment Agency working with a steering group which also includes district and county local authorities, and Natural England.
- 6.40 The process to develop the SMP in the second round is considered by consultees to be much improved in its approach to informing and engaging communities than was the case previously. However, the level of community awareness, understanding and engagement with the Shoreline Management Plan is related to the implications of the plan for the area. So whilst the Plan's policy in the short and long term is 'hold the line' there is not likely to be a great deal of engagement from the local community.
- 6.41 Those that are engaged and aware of the Shoreline Management Plan are, in the main, concerned about its methodology and its remit. The concerns about methodology relate to the technical mechanisms by which the Plan assigns values to the assets that defences would be protecting. Those assets include agricultural land, homes, businesses, infrastructure and environmental assets but there are concerns about that valuation process because of the implications it might have. The concerns about the remit of the Shoreline Management Plan are more fundamental. The Shoreline Management Plan prioritises locations to be defended and sets out how those defences would best delivered. But these priorities and engineering solutions are developed in the knowledge of the likely funding available, so the debate about what should be defended is implicitly limited by expectations regarding the budget of the Environment Agency.

### ***Regional, National and International Strategies***

#### *Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies*

- 6.42 Neither the **regional economic strategy** nor the **regional spatial strategy** says anything specific about the Blackwater Estuary. This is not surprising as the area is not a priority area for economic or physical development.
- 6.43 Within the East of England Plan, Policy SS9, is specifically focused on the coast. It emphasises a number of factors of importance to the East of England coast as a whole including the importance of the coast in terms of environmental protection and enhancement; the role of the coastal economy; and the importance of adaptation in the context of rising sea levels. However it does not specifically address the circumstances of Blackwater.

**Box 6-1: East of England Plan: Policy SS9 – The Coast**

The strategy for the coast is to adopt an integrated approach that recognises:

- its needs for environmental protection and enhancement
- the economic and social role of the region's ports, seaside towns and coastal areas important to tourism; and
- predicted sea level rise and the adaptation challenge this presents to coastal communities and decision makers.

Reflecting this approach, local planning authorities and other agencies should seek, through their plans and management strategies:

- the regeneration of coastal towns and communities, reinforcing their local economic and social roles and importance to the wider region; and
- the conservation of the coastal environment and coastal waters, including the natural character, historic environment and tranquillity of undeveloped areas, particularly in the areas of coastline and estuary designated as sites of European or international importance for wildlife.

Local Development Documents should:

- adopt policies which support the restructuring of coastal economies and the provision of jobs to satisfy local needs
- ensure, in the case of coastal resorts, that: the town centre continues to provide for local and visitor needs; improved linkages are created between the town centre and the main leisure area(s) to secure mutual strengthening of their vitality and viability; and retailing in main leisure area(s) is limited to that necessary to support the vitality and viability of the leisure function without having adverse impacts on the retail function of the town centre
- ensure that new development is compatible with shoreline management and other longer term flood management plans, so as to avoid constraining effective future flood management or increasing the need for new sea defences
- protect important coastal environmental assets, if practicable and sustainable without causing adverse impacts elsewhere. If it is not practicable to protect sites and habitats in situ, including sites of European or international importance for wildlife, shoreline management plans and development plans should include proposals for their long-term replacement and the recording of any lost historic assets
- investigate and pursue opportunities for the creation of new coastal habitats, such as salt marsh and mudflat, in areas identified for managed realignment. New development should not be permitted in such areas. •

*Source: East of England Plan*

6.44 In the context of this study not being a priority area is relevant for governance arrangements, for it determines the decisions that are made (or not made) and who may be involved in making them (or not).

### *National Energy Strategy*

6.45 However, the Blackwater Estuary is likely to be a national significant location for **new nuclear power** since the government announced that it expected a new generation of nuclear power stations to have a role in the UK future energy mix<sup>38</sup>. Developers will now be given the option to develop proposals for new nuclear power and it is expected that the sites that will be most suitable are the ten existing nuclear sites, including Bradwell. The aim is to have a new generation of nuclear power stations operating from around 2018.

6.46 The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) will be responsible for facilitating this development by reducing regulatory and planning risks for investors, and ensuring that owners and operators have robust funding plans for waste management and decommissioning. One of the means for addressing planning risk is likely to be the proposals for an Infrastructure Planning Commission to decide on major infrastructure proposals that were set out in the Planning White Paper in 2007<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> BERR, Nuclear white paper 2008: meeting the energy challenge (now the responsibility of DECC)

<sup>39</sup> CLG, Planning for a Sustainable Future: White Paper, 2007

### *The Birds and Habitats Directive*

- 6.47 The Birds Directive, adopted in 1979, protects all native and migratory wild birds and their habitats by giving member states the power and responsibility to classify Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Habitats Directive, adopted in 1992, protects natural habitats and other species of wild plants and animals with the same requirements for Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Together these provide a European network of protected areas known as Natura 2000.
- 6.48 The legal systems for the protection of terrestrial, intertidal, and sub-tidal Natura 2000 sites largely delivered through the SSSI mechanisms which fulfil Great Britain's obligations under Regulation 33 of the Habitats Regulations. This requires the relevant conservation agency, Natural England in England, to notify the relevant authority, land owners and occupiers management of the site and operations that will require the competent authorities consent. In the case of sub-tidal Natura 2000 sites, because there is no legislative framework for implementing the Habitats directive in the marine environment, Natural England must advise the relevant/competent authority of operations that would cause a deterioration or disturbance of natural habitats or species in the designated site.<sup>40</sup> The competent authority is the government department, district council, statutory undertakers (working on behalf of the railway, road transport, inland navigation, dock or harbour, etc.), who consent or undertake a plan or project that is likely to affect a designated European site.
- 6.49 Together these directives provide the most influential and far reaching pieces of European legislation relating to nature conservation.

## **II: Key coastal issues for the Blackwater Estuary**

- 6.50 In order to examine how well governance arrangements work and whether they face difficulties that are peculiar to coastal areas, a number of issues were identified to provide a focus for what could otherwise be a very broad study. The issues selected were ones that had the potential to illustrate characteristics of coastal governance arrangements, as opposed to governance arrangements anywhere<sup>41</sup>, and ones that cut across a number of governance agendas or 'lenses'. The issues that emerged from the analysis of the overarching documents for the Blackwater Estuary and discussion with the steering group were
- regeneration in flood risk areas
  - recreation and tourism in environmentally sensitive areas
  - securing the benefits of a new nuclear power station for the local area
  - managing the effects of coastal squeeze.
- 6.51 Table 6-4 summarises each of these four issues and highlights which lenses they relate to.

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<sup>40</sup> Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Management of the UK's European Marine Sites (EMS)

<sup>41</sup> It is important to note that the review of the overarching strategies and plans did reveal a number of issues that centred on housing & affordable housing or the transport agenda. However, in the course of this study, they were not the ones that were highlighted by stakeholders as being particularly illustrative of coastal governance issues. Where they were highlighted, the issues raised were about the fundamental requirements for housing and transport to meet the needs of any sustainable community

Table 6-4: Key issues for Blackwater Estuary

	Flood risk and coastal defence	Housing and affordable housing	Transport infrastructure	Environmental asset management	Economic regeneration
Investment in regenerating the Causeway Industrial area in Heybridge is a long standing economic development priority but would require development in an area of high flood risk	✓		✓	✓	✓
River and rural recreation and tourism are a major theme in developing the economy for the area around the Blackwater Estuary. But the attractiveness of the area is linked to its importance and quality of its habitats and wildlife which are recognised in number of environmental designations. The challenge is to lever the environmental assets of the area for the economy without stressing designated habitats	✓			✓	✓
The development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell would be so significant in scale that it would affect practically every aspect of life in the Blackwater Estuary. The most important of these would be the potential employment opportunities linked with construction and operation and the impact of a permanent structure on the mouth of a dynamic estuary on coastal management	✓				✓
The Blackwater Estuary is experiencing both natural and artificial coastal squeeze. Habitats on both the landward and seaward side of the defences are protected and require compensation if lost	✓			✓	

Source: SQW Consulting

- 6.52 The following sections provide further background to each of these issues before we turn to the governance arrangements that operate in each of them.

### **Regeneration in flood risk areas**

- 6.53 There has been a long standing need for higher quality **employment sites or premises** in Maldon as highlighted in the developing Maldon Core Strategy. The current main industrial area (Causeway area of Heybridge) is poor quality and in need of **regeneration**. It is located in the Heybridge Basin area of the district which is designated as a conservation area, reflecting the impact of the old lock and basin on the character on the area. Despite the economic and historic significance of the area, proposals for its regeneration must be weighed up against the risk to human safety of development at the site.
- 6.54 As set out in Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) Development and Flood Risk, developments in locations vulnerable to flood risk are subject to the sequential test and the exception test. The sequential test assesses development proposals for suitability if they are located on land in a flood risk area and if there are alternative sites at lower risk. The exception test acknowledges large areas of the country would be unsuitable for any development under the sequential test and subject to blight. Therefore the exception takes into consideration the development proposal's contribution to a sustainable community, its

use of brownfield land, any design features to cope with residual risk, and additional measures to reduce or manage the flood risk.

- 6.55 The Causeway area is located in one of the most vulnerable areas of the Blackwater Estuary in terms of **flood risk**. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>42</sup> prepared for the LDF, states that the 2007 classification of the Heybridge Basin is 77% in Flood Zone 3a (high probability), already the highest in the district. In the projections to 2107, the classification has changed to 95% Flood Zone 3b (functional flood plain).
- 6.56 Decisions on the site's regeneration need to be taken in light of the obligations it would create to provide flood defences in the long term. Currently there are no obvious alternative employment sites identified. However, practically any other location in or close to the town would represent a lower flood risk since much of the district is classified as Flood Zone 1 (low probability) or Flood Zone 2 (medium probability). Consistent with PPS25, the conclusion of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is that development should not be undertaken within Flood Zone 3b because of the high hazard.

### ***Recreation and tourism in environmentally sensitive areas***

- 6.57 The Blackwater Estuary has a number of **environmental designations** to protect the quality of its habitats and wildlife. As highlighted in the Essex SMP, the Blackwater Estuary is home to two national nature reserves (NNR), Old Hall Marshes managed by the RSPB, and Tollesbury Flats managed by Natural England. They are located on the northern shore of the Blackwater just west of West Mersea. NNR can be declared by Natural England in order to cover a selection of the best parts of sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) in the country but it is the underlying SSSI designation that gives the NNR strong legal protection. The SMP also highlights some of the offshore habitats, including muddy gravel around Ramsey Island and south of Tollesbury which are habitats for the Blackwater Herring, a distinct sub species not found elsewhere in Britain.
- 6.58 At the same time, it is this high quality environment which is a key element of the future economic sustainability of the local community via rural and river **recreation and tourism** which are highlighted in the local plans for both Maldon and Colchester. The responsibility to protect and conserve designated areas creates a requirement to manage the type and scale of recreation and tourism uses.
- 6.59 Usage is managed in various indirect ways. The amount of public access to the area's countryside and river can be limited by parking restrictions, the number of and access to moorings, and the extent of tourism marketing. There is also private access to the countryside and river through tourism facilities and clubs and marinas. Again the amount of access can be limited by membership and permissions for expansion or change of use that would be required to create or grow a development.
- 6.60 Type of use of rural and river areas can be managed rather more directly through the use of by-laws which can be enforced by a river bailiff, or through codes of conduct for clubs and membership organisations. It is a complicated process to meet the needs of a number of competing users of the Estuary, and local residents, as well as safeguarding protected habitats.

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<sup>42</sup> Maldon District Council, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2008

- 6.61 Some of the tensions, cited in the consultations and that are evident in the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan include damage to habitats through increased wave action and landings on salt marsh, location and concentration of use around moorings, or access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders disturbing wildlife. It also sets out a number of complementary uses for the estuary and ways use can be managed to protected habitats and wildlife such as zoning, restricting usage etc.
- 6.62 The environmentally sensitive nature of the area can place an additional obligation on the local area to create recreational and leisure space to avoid stressing designated areas.
- 6.63 It is important to note that although our consultations focused on the impact of recreation and tourism on designated areas, we are aware that there are significant issues this did not cover, particularly the economic uses of the estuary and the coast as a fishery, oyster bed and harbour. These are covered extensively in the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan and are only excluded here to limit the scope of the issues under consideration.

### ***Securing the benefits of a new nuclear power station for the local area***

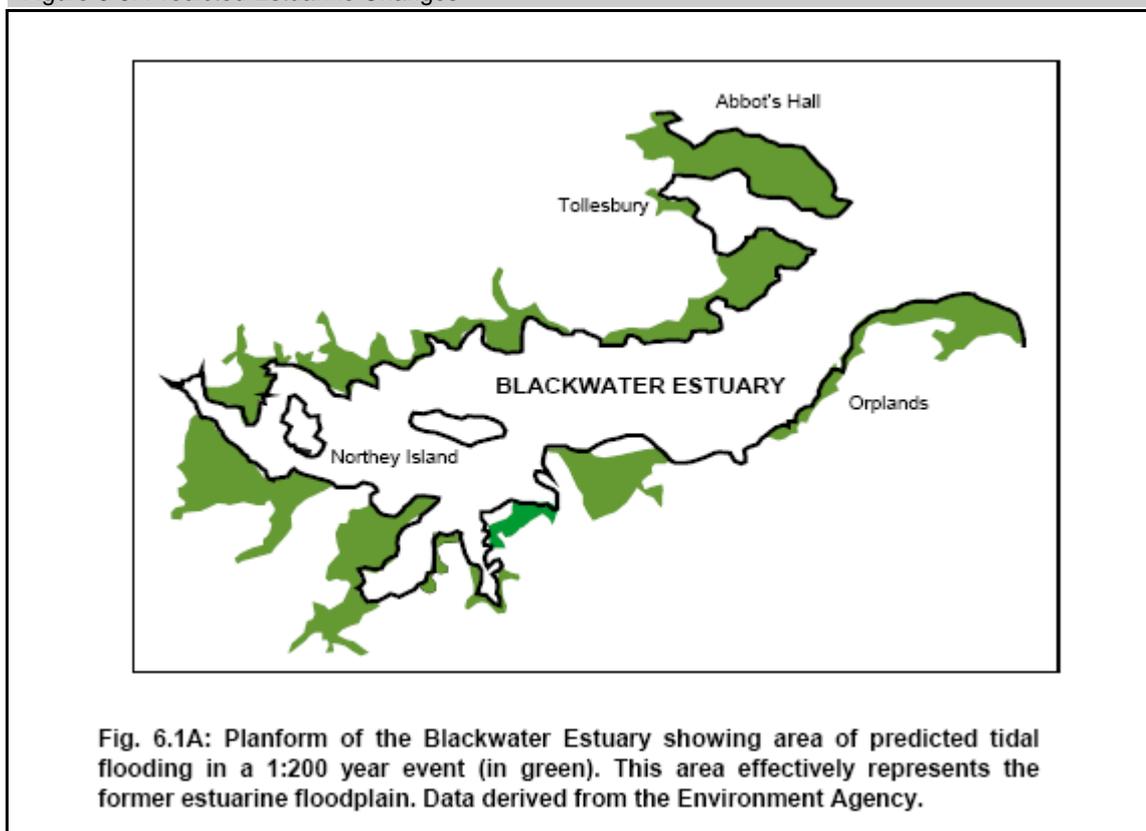
- 6.64 The possibility of a **new nuclear power station** at Bradwell would potentially create significant employment opportunities linked to its construction and operation. However the scale of the development – and the likely contract sizes – means that local firms are unlikely to be able to access them. Similarly, the skilled employment opportunities are likely to attract a number of new non-resident employees. So there will potentially be limited direct economic benefits to the local community although the indirect benefits are likely to be significant.
- 6.65 However the immediate community is largely supportive of the new development, perhaps because it is accustomed to a nuclear facility at the site and has benefitted from the investment in the area that resulted from developer contributions as part of the planning conditions or s106 requirements. Future investment is likely to be significant for a development of this scale and could consist of infrastructure, community facilities or green infrastructure for the local community. The operator of the plant is also likely to work hard to become a ‘good neighbour’ to the local community which will affect its procurement policy, its sponsorship of local causes and events, and its investment in the local area.
- 6.66 For Bradwell, as a nationally strategic infrastructure, provision would have to be made for long term defences (150 years) and would provide a permanent hard structure on the mouth of a dynamic estuary. The way in which the plant is defended will have consequences for the way the estuary is managed in the long term.

### ***Managing the effects of coastal squeeze***

- 6.67 The geomorphology of the Blackwater Estuary is such that the area is experiencing both **natural and artificial coastal squeeze**. Responding to this means striking a balance between protecting local communities and landward freshwater habitats and allowing the retreat of coastal habitats. Coastal squeeze has to be managed in the context of a local loss of coastal habitats and also the potential requirement to provide compensatory habitat for developments in other parts of the county.

- 6.68 The Essex and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan<sup>43</sup> explains that of all the Essex estuaries, the Thames and the Blackwater Estuaries are predicted to have the highest levels of land transgression associated with sea level rise of 6mm per year. This is because of the low lying (and sinking) land in both areas. In Blackwater it is predicted that this would expose an additional kilometre of salt marsh edge to erosion over a 100 year period.
- 6.69 Figure 6-3 provides a map of predicted estuarine changes that would result from a 1 in 200 year tidal flooding event. The area of the former estuarine flood plain includes the Causeway areas of Heybridge (on the small outcrop on the northern side at the start of the estuary), parts of Maldon (on the southern side at the start of the estuary), and the site of the current Bradwell power station (on the southern side of the estuary at the top of the Dengie peninsula).

Figure 6-3: Predicted Estuarine Changes



Source: Essex and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan (CHaMP), 2002

- 6.70 The impact on designated features of this prediction, which is based on assumptions of a 6 mm sea level rise per year and the maintenance of existing flood defences, includes the loss of all saltmarsh in the Blackwater by 2050, and a loss of between 15 – 35% in the Colne. This would have a number of ecological implications with respect to Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and significant habitat creation would have to be undertaken to comply with EU directives on habitats and wild birds respectively.
- 6.71 There have been several retreat sites established in the Blackwater Estuary in recent years at Abbotts Hall farm (117 acres of saltmarsh and 84 acres of coastal grassland), Northey Island

<sup>43</sup> The Essex and Estuaries Coastal Habitat Management Plan, 2002

(6 acres), Tollesbury (40 acres), and Orplands near Bradwell Marina (90 acres)<sup>44</sup>. The breaching of defences at these sites leads to a loss of designated terrestrial habitat but the safeguarding or gain in inter-tidal habitat. The idea of maintaining an ecological balance has to be seen in the context of a dynamic estuarine/coastal system.

- 6.72 All of these retreat sites have developed as ad-hoc responses to opportunities to create habitats, and are the subject of detailed monitoring to examine their impact on the estuary. It is sometimes the case that breaches in the sea defences, which allow a greater volume of water into the estuary, increase the rate of water flow. This in turn has a detrimental effect on salt marsh elsewhere.
- 6.73 Although decisions about hold the line and managed retreat are also relevant ones for local people, none of the retreat sites have been motivated by experimenting with alternative, sustainable and maybe in the long term cheaper options for coastal defence for communities.

### III: Coastal governance in the Blackwater Estuary

- 6.74 The governance arrangements that are associated with decision-making in relation to each of these issues are combinations of organisations and partnerships making different types of decision dependent on their remit.
- some organisations have decision-making **powers**, meaning they can permit – or not permit – certain actions i.e. granting planning permission or membership rights, or creation and enforcement of by-laws
  - some organisations' decision-making gives them the ability to confer a status or priority that will **influence** the actions of others i.e. designating an area a regeneration priority, developing a tourism strategy or a policy for coastal management in the Shoreline Management Plan
  - some organisations' input to decision-making is in relation to the allocation of their own **funding**, giving them the ability to invest or provide resources e.g. investing in development, recruiting a tourism and recreation officer, providing grant funding for a particular initiative.
- 6.75 Most issues will be managed by a number of organisations which are responsible for making decisions in one of more of these categories. That is not in itself a problem but an examination of the rationale for decision-making or the unintended consequences of decisions should be helpful in revealing some of the issues beneath the complexity of coastal governance arrangements.
- 6.76 The following sections map the decision-making bodies that have a role in relation to each of our key issues. They then set out where they 'work' and 'don't work' in relation to decision-making processes of relevance to the issue being considered. This assessment draws on consultations, the workshop (held in July 2009), and the views of the consultants as appropriate.

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<sup>44</sup> Abbots Hall Farm realignment, Wildlife Trust Essex Wildlife Trusts Fact Sheets, Spring 2004

### Regenerating the Causeway

6.77 Table 6-5 provides a 'map' of the organisations involved in decision-making in the context of regenerating the Causeway area in Heybridge.

**Table 6-5: Governance map for regenerating the Causeway**

Organisation or Partnership	Role in the decision-making process	Powers	Influence	Funding
Maldon DC	Planning authority for development proposals	✓		
Maldon DC	Responsibility for the identification and allocation of employment land in the Local Development Framework as well as identification of economic and regeneration priorities for the area		✓	
Maldon DC	Discretionary funds to support regeneration priorities (although very limited)			✓
Environment Agency	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and advisor to planning authority with respect of development flood risk		✓	
Environment Agency	Lead agency for the partnership producing the Shoreline Management Plan which sets the long term plans for managing risk from flooding in the area		✓	
Environment Agency	Responsibility and budget for the maintenance of existing and the construction of new defences			✓
Anglian Water	Statutory consultee with respect to any development proposal and advisor to the planning authority on the associated water and sewage implications		✓	
Developer/ owner	Owner of the proposals and funder of the development. Could include funding for development to flood tolerant standard or to maintain sea defences (funding may be discretionary or levied as a requirement of planning permission)			✓
Essex County Council	Discretionary funds to support regeneration priorities although very limited and unlikely to support an initiative not locally supported			✓
Natural England	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and advisor to planning authority with respect of environmental impact		✓	
Highways Agency	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and ability to raise decisive objections to development that impacts on strategic highways network	✓		
English Heritage	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and advisor to the planning authority with respect of impact on the built environment		✓	

- 6.78 In relation to the Causeway there are relatively few organisations with powers or funding but a great number with influence. The majority of the influence is exercised through the planning system.
- 6.79 In the view of many local stakeholders, expressed at the Blackwater Estuary workshop, the issue in relation to flood risk in the Causeway area could be addressed by technical solutions and sea defences. It was considered that the process of balancing the economic development need and flood risk had worked well. As a result, the majority of the discussion was focused on decision-making failures in the economic development & regeneration arena such as lack of integrated vision for the Causeway within the town to link to other development and guide the proposals of the developer.
- 6.80 However, the view that the balance of economic development and flood risk had worked well seemed to be predicated on the assumption that development would be able to go ahead – which was the right decision from the local community’s point of view. Table 6-6 provides an overview of where and why governance arrangements are considered to have worked well or not.

Table 6-6: Reasons why governance arrangements work or not in relation to decision-making on regenerating the Causeway

**Reasons why they work**

- clear process for the allocation of employment sites in the LDF and granting of permission for development which requires a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the application of the sequential test
- requirement to think about flood risk in relation to planning decisions prompted innovative thinking about design and use for particular sites
- close working between the local authority and the Environment Agency allow technical solutions so that development can proceed.

**Reasons why they do not work**

- the relatively short term horizon of the LDF favours technical fixes over relocation of employment sites
- the decision-making is skewed by the fact the funding to provide defences is provided by the Environment Agency but the funding to provide for relocation of an employment site is not provided by anyone
- the relatively short horizon of the LDF focuses decision makers on the immediate priorities of economic development and transport in relation to regeneration
- there is no transitional plan within the LDF for sites at high flood risk which sets out appropriate uses in the medium or long term
- the public sector preference for development at the Causeway site does not appear to be taken in light of the high cost and risk to a developer which may prevent delivery.

*Source: SQW review and workshop*

- 6.81 The underlying challenges to the governance process seem to be:

*Long term vs. short term prioritisation*

- long term risk factors seem to have little effect on the prioritisation process for economic development. The preference for technical fixes and continued defence is so strong that there is little space or engagement with the need for a longer term debate on the managed realignment on the Estuary.

*Lack of mechanisms to support transition*

- decision-making on development at the Causeway is influenced by the absence of mechanisms to deliver alternatives. Maldon District Council is unlikely to have, or to be able to attract, sufficient funding to support the development of an alternative employment site with all the associated infrastructure and services that would require.

*Absence of a transition plan for sites*

- the LDF, despite assessing the long term flood risk of sites, does not use that information to provide a medium and long term transition plan. This could specify appropriate uses, design and emergency planning requirements which could potentially allow time limited developments to proceed.

**Recreation and tourism in environmentally sensitive areas**

6.82 Table 6-7 provides a map of the organisations involved in decisions concerning the management of tourism and recreation in the Blackwater Estuary alongside habitat and wildlife designations.

**Table 6-7: Governance map for recreation and tourism in environmentally sensitive area**

<b>Organisation or Partnership</b>	<b>Role in the decision-making process</b>	<b>Powers</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Natural England	Responsibility for the protection of designated areas	✓		
Natural England	Remit to promote access		✓	
Maldon DC/ Colchester BC	Powers to manage use of the estuary via parking restrictions, mooring rights, by-laws	✓		
Maldon DC/ Colchester BC	Planning authority for development up to high water mark that may be associated with the creation or expansion of facilities for tourism and recreation	✓		
Maldon DC/ Colchester BC	Remit for local recreation and tourism priorities, and associated officers and funding  Resources for enforcement staff such as River Bailiff			✓
Essex County Council	Discretionary funds to support tourism priorities although very limited and unlikely to support an initiative not locally supported			✓
Marinas, Sailing Clubs, and Essex Waterways	Membership and mooring rights and discretionary funding for development	✓		
Owner / Developer proposing creation or expansion of facilities for recreation or tourism (i.e. marinas, sailing clubs, farmers, other landowners)	Owner of the proposals and funder of the development. Could include funding for development at a high environmental standard			✓
Marine Police	Enforce speed limit by-laws	✓		

<b>Organisation or Partnership</b>	<b>Role in the decision-making process</b>	<b>Powers</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Maldon Harbour Authority	Powers and limited funding to develop harbour facilities and dredge the estuary. However in practice these powers are not exercised	✓		
Marine and Fisheries Agency	Issues Food and Environment Protection Act (FEPA) and Coast Protection Act (CPA) required licences for the dredging of channel on behalf of Defra and BIS	✓		
English Heritage	Responsibility for the protection of historic environment	✓		
English Heritage	Remit for management of and access to the asset under its management	✓		
Environment Agency	Nation-wide remit for strategy on water recreation and biodiversity		✓	
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Remit for management of and access to the asset under its management	✓		
Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)	Remit for management of and access to the asset under its management	✓		
National Trust	Remit for management of and access to the asset under its management	✓		

- 6.83 In relation to the management of recreation and tourism in the Blackwater Estuary, there are a great number of organisations with powers (whether statutory or through dint of management of recreational or tourism assets). So there are significant coordination issues for the bodies which are faced with balancing the needs of multiple, potentially competing, uses.
- 6.84 In addition there is a number of genuinely confusing areas of governance and ‘grey areas’. For example, in relation to moorings there are real legal complexities. Some moorings are public and some are managed by sailing clubs and marinas – all licences for moorings (even for individual moorings) are provided by the Crown Estates as the land owner of most of the seabed but they are usually managed through a block lease or licence by harbour commissioners, a local authority, or a boat club. Maldon District Council is unusual in actually being owners of the sea bed in the Estuary. Also in theory all moorings need a Food and Environmental Protection Act (FEPA) licence but these may be subsumed within the harbour authority consent.
- 6.85 Another aspect which complicates governance arrangements in relation to recreation and tourism is the impact of one activity or use on another. One example of good practice here is the work by Colchester Borough Council and Natural England on the impact of human activity on designated sites. The council will be undertaking visitor monitoring which alongside Natural England’s monitoring of European sites will provide additional information on human impact to improve management.
- 6.86 The most comprehensive attempt to address the issues of coordination and inter-relationships of activity in and around the Estuary is the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan described in Box 6-2.

#### Box 6-2: Blackwater Estuary Management Plan

The Blackwater Project ran between 1992 and 2005. Its aim was to promote the sustainable use of the estuary & the surrounding landscape. One of the chief outputs of the project was the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan which was the result of three years effort by the project team working with a very wide range of stakeholders in the district. It was published in 1996 and signed up to by 70 stakeholder organisations with an interest in and a responsibility for management of the estuary.

It provided a comprehensive assessment of issues for landscape & the coastal environment, intertidal areas & water quality, nature conservation, agriculture, coastal economy, water recreation, countryside recreation, education, interpretation & research. It also set out an action plan in relation to each of these areas to coordinate activity across a number of agencies to be supported by the project team, the district & borough council partnership and the joint steering group.

It is regarded as an extremely successful endeavour and although it was not a statutory document it had sufficient local engagement and ownership to drive action.

The development of the plan was seen as a major success and still is – but the end of the project funding by the district council meant the implementation phase of the plan was never taken forward as intended which has been frustrating for many of the local stakeholders who put so much into the project.

Source: SQW Consulting

- 6.87 Many of the issues for decision-making in relation to recreation and tourism are highlighted in the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan and were reiterated in the workshop. The management plan itself is an illustration of the governance challenges in coastal areas: after securing a wide degree of engagement and enthusiasm during its development, it was not taken forward because funding and resources were not available for the implementation phase. Table 6-8 provides an overview of where and why governance arrangements are considered to have worked well or not.

Table 6-8: Reasons why governance arrangements work or not in relation to decision-making in managing recreation and tourism in environmentally sensitive areas

#### Reasons why they work

- stakeholders are able to come together to understand each other's needs and issues and develop a joint action plan, as demonstrated in the case of the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan, if they have funding and project momentum
- close working between officers and stakeholders enables the development of mutually beneficial solutions
- high level of understanding amongst key decision makers of the impacts of recreation and tourism on designated areas and a willingness to manage and mitigate them
- ability to enact and enforce policy and by-laws by employment of river bailiff in Maldon.

#### Reasons why they do not work

- the legal protection for designated sites and the demand for recreational space can set the needs of people and habitats in opposition
- there are multiple decision makers and stakeholders making the legal framework and responsibility for decision-making complex to understand
- the management of recreation and tourism is not a statutory activity so it is relatively low priority for most councils and they are often the only body which can coordinate jointly agreed action plans and establish codes of conduct across a range of stakeholders
- the planning system is too conservative to allow for high value and innovative recreational and tourism schemes, such as very low impact eco-lodges in the marshes, so there is a failure to understand and capture economic opportunities
- by-laws and restrictions on designated sites are not enforced because of lack of resource to police them in some councils and lack of capacity to prosecute in Natural England.

Source: SQW review and workshop

6.88 The underlying challenges to the governance process seem to be:

*Lack of coordination capacity*

- the number of and interdependencies between users of the Blackwater Estuary demands coordination to ensure protection of designated areas, appropriate capture of economic opportunities, and appropriate recreational use by residents and visitors. This has happened very successfully as a result of the Blackwater Estuary Management Plan but failed to progress to the implementation phase because of a lack of coordination capacity.

*Low priority for funding*

- there is a lack of resources to enforce by-laws, regulations, codes of conduct or provide for management systems for the estuary's usage such as zoning.

***New nuclear power station***

6.89 Table 6-9 provides a 'map' of the organisations that would be involved in a decision on proposals for a development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell. It is important to note that some of the decision-making structures for new nuclear power stations are still to be established; the table contains both current arrangements and proposed arrangements where they are known.

Table 6-9: Governance map for proposals for a new nuclear power station at Bradwell				
Organisation or Partnership	Role in the decision-making process	Powers	Influence	Funding
Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)	Responsibility for providing the national policy framework for energy and nuclear power set out in the Energy White Paper	✓		
Developer/operator of nuclear power station	Owner of the proposals and funder of the development. Proposals for associated transport, community facilities and green infrastructure, etc. are likely to be required as part of the planning permission			✓
Maldon DC	Planning authority for development proposals  (proposals for a national planning authority for major developments)	✓		
Infrastructure Planning Commission (in future) (IPC)	Potential planning authority for development proposals	✓		
Environment Agency	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and advisor to planning authority with respect of development flood risk		✓	
Natural England	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and advisor to planning authority with respect of environmental impact		✓	

Organisation or Partnership	Role in the decision-making process	Powers	Influence	Funding
Highways Agency	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and ability to raise decisive objections to development that impacts on strategic highways network	✓		
English Heritage	Statutory consultee with respect to development proposals and advisor to the planning authority with respect of impact on the built environment		✓	

6.90 In relation to the decision-making for proposals for a new nuclear power station, the governance map is rather short. This may be the result of a rather more strict interpretation of who is a decision maker in respect of this type of development because although a number of organisations may have an influence on the process, the decision-making is relatively centralised and nationally directed. Table 6-10 provides an overview of where and why governance arrangements are considered to have worked well or not, recognising that the decision-making process is still ongoing.

**Table 6-10: Reasons why governance arrangements work or not in relation to proposals for a new nuclear power station**

**Reasons why they work**

- the national strategy and centralised process make it clear who is making the decisions
- the long lead time for the development of a new generation of nuclear power stations mean that proposals are referred to in all the local strategies so implications and opportunities are understood
- the government departments leading the process (initially BERR (now DIUS) and latterly DECC) are active in engaging with the community through consultations
- the surrounding community and local stakeholders are accustomed to the impact of a nuclear power station in the area so the proposal is a 'known quantity'
- although the planning decision is likely to be taken at a national level the local authority will be able to input to s106 negotiations via a local steering group.

**Reasons why they do not work**

- the development would have wider impact than Maldon District, not least the visual impact from the coast of Colchester Borough, but surrounding areas will not be statutory consultees to the planning process
- the scale of the development means there are relatively few opportunities the local community can take direct advantage of
- the decision-making process for major infrastructure is changing and there is some uncertainty around the details of the planning process as the Infrastructure Planning Commission is still being established
- the effect of a new nuclear power station, a significant permanent structure on the coast with long term requirements for defence, on the dynamic functioning of the estuary will be considered outside of the Shoreline Management Plan processes.

*Source: SQW review and workshop*

6.91 The underlying challenges to the governance process seem to be:

*Defining the appropriate "community" relevant for decision-making*

- a number of stakeholders affected by the proposals would have little input to the decision-making process. This is the case for Colchester BC, which is likely to be consulted about any development but would have limited input because the development would be located outside of its administrative boundaries.

*Ability to tailoring national decisions to local circumstances*

- the decision-making criteria for national infrastructure is directed nationally and although it is included in local plans for the area there is likely to be less opportunity to shape and tailor proposals to the specific circumstance and benefit of the local community or environment. This may relate to the economic benefit that may result from the development or the way it is constructed to align with overall plan to achieve a more sustainable estuary.

**Management of coastal squeeze**

6.92 Table 6-11 provides a map of the organisations involved in decision-making in relation to the management of coastal squeeze.

Table 6-11: Governance map for management of coastal squeeze				
Organisation or Partnership	Role in the decision-making process	Powers	Influence	Funding
Environment Agency	Responsibility for the creation of a flood risk management strategy for Essex		✓	
Environment Agency	Lead agency in the partnership producing the Shoreline Management Plan which sets the long term plans for managing risk from flooding and coast erosion		✓	
Environment Agency	Permissive powers to maintain existing and construct new sea defences	✓		
Environment Agency	Management of the national budget for the maintenance of existing and construction of new sea defences			✓
Maldon DC	Responsibility for the maintenance of parts of the sea wall not under Environment Agency remit			✓
Landowners	Owner of proposals and provider of funding to breach the seawall and deliver a realignment scheme or maintain or construction new sea defences			✓
Defra	Responsible authority for compensatory habitats on behalf of the UK government under the Habitats and Wild Birds Directive	✓		
Defra	Provider of policy direction to support development of approaches to coastal change		✓	
Defra	Provider of discretionary funding to support the development of approaches to coastal change or to discharge duty to provide compensatory habitats i.e. Innovation Fund, Higher level Stewardship, or purchase of land for habitat site			✓
Environment Agency	Responsibility for the delivery of compensatory habitat			✓
Essex & Suffolk Water/Anglian Water	Right to abstract water	✓		
Maldon DC	Planning authority for development proposals for either realignment or sea wall improvements	✓		
Natural England	Statutory advisor to competent authority under Habitats Regulations	✓	✓	

- 6.93 The responsibility for addressing coastal squeeze is distributed amongst a number of organisations in a rather ad-hoc way. In part this results from the fact that the EU directives for the protection of habitats and wild birds were originally intended to deal with threats that resulted from development proposals. In the Blackwater, much of the threat to the coastal and freshwater habitats results from a process of sea-level rise and tidal flooding and the response is opportunity-led.
- 6.94 However, the response to coastal squeeze has been proactive and a number of schemes for managed retreat have been piloted in the Blackwater Estuary. Most have been successful but some less so. The learning from the successful realignment at Abbots Hall Farm in 2002 is summarised in Box 6-3.

**Box 6-3: Lessons learned from the Abbots Hall Farm realignment**

When the sea level rises, saltmarsh is eroded at the seaward edge because saltmarsh plants cannot survive under deep sea water. On a natural coastline, new salt marsh is formed on slightly higher land as the conditions become suitable there. Sea walls prevent this formation of new saltmarsh on higher land. The erosion of the saltmarsh in front of the sea defences is called coastal squeeze and it is evident in many places on the Blackwater Estuary.

To compensate for this habitat loss, the Essex Wildlife Trust undertook a realignment scheme at its site at Abbots Hall Farm where the 3.8km of sea walls along the north bank of the Salcott Channel (with saltmarsh on the seaward side), was subject to coastal squeeze. The coastal realignment project breached the sea wall so that new saltmarsh can form further inland. Short sections of sea wall were built at the ends of the site to protect neighbouring properties. The slope of the land at Abbots Hall now supports a range of intertidal habitats and is regarded as a highly successful example of realignment.

The lessons learned from the scheme have been summarised by the Essex Wildlife Trust.

Consultation and Engagement	Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consult widely and early</li><li>• Be sensitive to differing viewpoints</li><li>• Be totally honest</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raise the profile within council</li><li>• Facilitate the flow of information</li><li>• Brief councillors before application</li></ul>
Location	Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Budget may dictate location</li><li>• Topography is critical</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You get what you design</li><li>• Lapses in design continue to present problems long after it is too late to adjust them</li></ul>
Finance	Construction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subsidy is a good economic base for the landowner, but is not sufficient alone</li><li>• Creative planning surrounding the realignment can generate ideas for funding and ongoing economic viability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The construction process is restricted by Habitats Regulations</li><li>• Building with stakeholders in mind can win over support</li></ul>
Publicity	Visitor Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a communications strategy involving all the partners at the outset</li><li>• Treat the media with care - get them interested but try to avoid bad news</li><li>• Engage the public to empower decision makers</li><li>• Agree the ownership or branding of publicity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interpretation on site is important and costly</li></ul>
	Maintenance & Monitoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitoring is critical and expensive</li><li>• Ongoing expert maintenance is required</li></ul>

Source: Essex Wildlife Trust, Abbots Hall Farm-Lessons Learnt from Realignment (2005)

- 6.95 Managed realignment schemes tend to be a response to particular – and quite ad hoc – opportunities. The proposals are usually driven by the creation of coastal habitat and they rely on motivated landowners (e.g. Essex Wildlife Trust or RSPB). They tend not to be focused on issues of coastal management per se. Hence despite the success of many of the individual realignment schemes there is concern that they are not guided by a strategic overview and therefore it is not clear how these individual sites contribute to the management

of the estuary as a whole. The intention is for the second round Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2), currently under development, to deliver a strategic level overview for management realignment proposals in the future for the Blackwater Estuary and Essex as a whole.

- 6.96 A second concern is related to the provision of compensatory habitats in the Blackwater Estuary for developments that occur elsewhere in the country. The attempts of Defra to identify compensatory habitat for Lappel Bank on the Medway Estuary and Fagbury Flats on the Stour/Orwell Estuary provide an example of governance arrangements not working well. New sites were required as a result of proposals for expansion at Medway port and Bathside Bay development at Harwich and the initial proposals included Weymark, a site in the Blackwater Estuary and Wallasea Island, a site on the southern side of the Crouch Estuary. The opposition to the proposal for a 170 hectare wetland at Weymarks was so great that it had to be abandoned and the Wallasea Island proposal went ahead instead.
- 6.97 A major element of the opposition was associated with the fact the proposal would have meant the loss of a local beach. But the imposition of the proposal on the community as a result of development happening elsewhere in the county was also a factor. There remains a concern that the Blackwater Estuary may be expected to compensate for development elsewhere and these proposals will come top down without linking into local decisions about managed realignment on the estuary as a whole.
- 6.98 The issues of managed realignment are well understood in the local area. The lack of a systematic approach to deciding about breaches, concerns about the process for valuing agricultural land, and the time-limited nature of compensation schemes like the Higher Level Stewardship Schemes have been raised in parliament<sup>45</sup>. A systematic approach to managed realignment will hopefully be one of the outcomes of the revised SMP. Practical measures are also being developed and piloted through initiatives such as the Managing Coastal Change project<sup>46</sup>, run by CLA, FWAG and NFU and funded by Defra innovation fund which provides land managers with information on change.
- 6.99 Table 6-12 provides an overview of where and why governance arrangements are considered to have worked well or not.

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<sup>45</sup> Hansard, Sea Defences Essex, 2004,

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo041012/halltext/41012h05.htm#41012h05\\_snew0](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo041012/halltext/41012h05.htm#41012h05_snew0)

<sup>46</sup> The Managing Coastal Change project is run by the County Land and Business Association (CLA), Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and the National Farmers Union (NFU) with funding from the Defra Innovation Fund

Table 6-12: Reasons why governance arrangements work or not in managing coastal squeeze

**Reasons why they work**

- the number of pilot schemes in the area has created a body of expertise on the technical and process elements required to deliver a realignment site
- research into the benefits of managed realignment – improved fish stocks, carbon sequestration, and tourism – are designed to enable these schemes to be linked into local area initiatives
- landowners in the Essex farming community are engaged and preparing for coastal change through diversifying into alternative farming, realignment of their land, or maintaining their own sea defences with the help of protocols established with the Environment Agency.

**Reasons why they do not work**

- the lack of long term compensation for land and mechanisms to retreat farming and other economic uses of land (in the same way as for habitats) is a barrier
- we fail to think inventively and look at economic assets differently i.e. farming and harvesting samphire which requires saline conditions
- there is no clear responsibility to trigger compensation for habitat when its loss is not associated with development
- the legal protection for designated sites and the demand to defend communities and economic assets can set the needs of people and habitats in opposition
- there is no strategic overview for individual schemes and managed realignment is entirely motivated by habitat replacement
- habitat compensation requirements come top down and fail to engage the local community.

Source: SQW review and workshop

6.100 The underlying challenges to the governance process seem to be:

*Realignment to address coastal squeeze is not linked to overall estuary strategy*

- until SMP2 is developed there will be no strategic overview of realignment and its potential as a sustainable coastal defence management option. The decisions about habitats provision are taken in isolation from the overall approach to the management of the estuary which means opportunities for wider benefits may not be captured.

*No mechanism for managing retreat and coastal change for farming*

- there is no long term compensation scheme or retreat policy to support local farmers faced with land that is subject to coastal squeeze which might incentives managed retreat schemes.

## 7: Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft

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### Background

7.1 Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth are towns with resident populations – at the time of the last Census – of 63,900 and 58,000 people respectively. The two towns are approximately 10 miles apart and both are located on the region's east coast:

- Great Yarmouth – the dominant settlement currently within the lower tier Borough of Great Yarmouth and the second largest town in the upper tier county of Norfolk – is situated at the mouth of the River Yare and its site is a former spit
- Lowestoft – within Waveney district and Suffolk County – is bisected by Lake Lothing which is also home to the town's port.

7.2 Both towns are intrinsically coastal in character, in physical and environmental terms, and with regard to their socio-economic make-up. In both cases, the management of flood risk is an on-going challenge and – in the context of rising sea levels – is bound up with fluvial and particularly tidal issues and processes. Additionally, both are characterised by significant economic deprivation which is exacerbated by their urban form: housing is separated from employment provision and both towns are arguing for additional river crossings, such that they might function better as "socio-economic places". In addition, the maritime location of the two towns defines much of their resource base for economic activity: in both cases, tourism is important as is ports-related activity and increasingly, both towns are focusing on opportunities relating to renewable energy.

7.3 The chapter that follows considers some of the distinctively coastal challenges facing Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, and the processes through which these are being addressed. It is based on a review of relevant policy literature, consultations with stakeholders and a workshop that was held in Lowestoft on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009. It is structured into a number of sub-sections:

- it considers, first, the multi-layered policy framework within which decisions with regard to the future of the two towns are made
- reflecting on this, it distils three issues which are absolutely crucial with regard to the future of the two towns and within which there are competing – and at times conflicting – policy imperatives and drivers. For each of these, it examines the machinery of governance and it seeks to distil key elements of the processes through which actual decisions are made (or not made). In this context, implicit reference is made to three broad "types" of governance process resulting from:
  - statutory or regulatory powers
  - exercising influence
  - the use of funding and resources

- it then looks across these three governance processes to try and identify the nature of “good” and “bad” governance, and to identify some common themes
- finally – on the basis of the Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft case study – it attempts to draw out some conclusions that might have wider currency – both in relation to the study as a whole and in the context of the wider Coastal Initiative.

## I: Key elements of the policy context

- 7.4 For Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the policy architecture – as defined in relation to the five “lenses” that have shaped this study – is summarised in the Table overleaf. This suggests many “layers” of strategy/policy – from national to sub-national and local – *and* across each of the five lenses. In the paragraphs that follow we summarise the principal elements that together define the framework within which governance processes operate.

Table 7-1: Key Strategies and Plans of relevance to governance issues in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft

Lens	Sub-Regional/Local Strategies	Regional Strategies	National Strategies
<b>Cross-Cutting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Yarmouth Sustainable Community Strategy</li> <li>Waveney Community Strategy</li> <li>Suffolk Community Strategy &amp; Suffolk LAA</li> <li>Norfolk Community Strategy (Norfolk Ambition) &amp; Norfolk LAA</li> <li>Great Yarmouth Local Development Framework (Core Strategy, Area Action Plan for Great Yarmouth and associated documents)</li> <li>Waveney Local Development Framework (Core Strategy, Area Action Plan for Lowestoft, and associated documents)</li> <li>Suffolk Climate Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy</li> <li>Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England</li> <li><i>Inventing our Future</i> – Regional Economic Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Policy Statements and Guidance</li> <li>Planning Circulars</li> <li><i>Securing the Future</i> – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy</li> <li>A strategy for promoting an integrated approach to the management of coastal areas in England (Defra, 2007)</li> <li>Marine and Coastal Access Bill (currently going through parliament), including provision for Marine Policy Statements and formation of Marine Management Organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Flood risk and coastal defences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan</li> <li>Broadland Rivers Catchment Flood Management Plan, 2006</li> <li>Waveney, Lower Yare &amp; Lothingland Internal Drainage Board Policy Statement</li> <li>Lowestoft to Thorpeness Strategy, 2003</li> <li>Surface Water Management Plans (forthcoming)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floods and Water Management Bill (currently a draft – provisions include a requirement for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (which should add democratic input))</li> </ul>
<b>Housing and affordable housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sub-Regional Housing Strategy for Great Yarmouth and Waveney, 2005-2010</li> <li>Waveney Housing Strategy</li> <li>Yarmouth and Waveney Sub-Regional Homelessness Strategy, 2008-2013</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Housing Strategy, 2005-10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Communities Plan, 2003 (then-ODPM)</li> <li>Strong and Prosperous Communities, 2006 – Local Government White Paper</li> <li>Housing Green Paper, 2007</li> </ul>
<b>Transport infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suffolk Local Transport Plan, 2006-2011</li> <li>Norfolk Local Transport Plan, 2006-2011</li> <li>Suffolk Rail Strategy</li> <li>Suffolk Bus Strategy</li> <li>Passenger Rail Strategy for Norfolk</li> <li>1<sup>st</sup> East Corporate Business Plan, 2009-2012 (and Delivery Plan)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Transport Strategy (included in East of England Plan)</li> <li>Greater Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy, 2007 (Network Rail)</li> <li>A47/A12 (Peterborough to Lowestoft) Route Management Strategy (Highways Agency)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Towards a Sustainable Transport System, 2007, and Delivering a Sustainable Transport System, 2008; these will be supported by National Policy Statements</li> </ul>

<b>Lens</b>	<b>Sub-Regional/Local Strategies</b>	<b>Regional Strategies</b>	<b>National Strategies</b>
<b>Environmental asset management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Strategy, 2008-2013</li> <li>• Broads Plan 2004, 2004-2024</li> <li>• Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan</li> <li>• Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan</li> <li>• Winterton Dunes Coastal Habitat Management Plan (CHaMP), 2003</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England – England Biodiversity Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Economic regeneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waveney Tourism Strategy</li> <li>• Waveney Cultural Strategy</li> <li>• Waveney Prospectus (outside the URC area)</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> East Corporate Business Plan, 2009-2012 (and Delivery Plan) (inside the URC area)</li> <li>• Leisure Strategy for Great Yarmouth, 2006-2016</li> <li>• Great Yarmouth Tourism Strategy</li> <li>• Great Yarmouth Cultural Strategy</li> <li>• Waveney District Council Economic Regeneration Strategy, 2008-2017</li> </ul>		

*Source: SQW Consulting*

## Overarching local strategies and plans

7.5 At a local level, the most holistic statement of priorities is incorporated within the **Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs)** for the districts of Great Yarmouth and Waveney, linked to the county-level **Local Area Agreements**. In both cases, very high level visions are articulated within the SCSs. In Great Yarmouth, the Vision – set out in the first 2020 Vision Statement (drafted in 1997) and retained subsequently – is simply “*we want our community to offer a high quality of life and a secure future for all our residents*”<sup>47</sup>. In Waveney, the Vision is more detailed and specific: “*prosperous, attractive and vibrant communities with good access to jobs, services and facilities and where everybody can feel safe, be healthy and happy*”. For Great Yarmouth, three themes (and thirteen supporting objectives) are seen to be critical to achieving this vision. Four main themes are identified in support of Waveney’s vision – as summarised in the Table below.

Table 7-2: Sustainable Community Strategies: Key Themes

Great Yarmouth <sup>48</sup>	Waveney
<p>Theme 1: A prosperous and dynamic economy</p> <p>Improve transport, energy and communication networks</p> <p>Improve and expand the built environment</p> <p>Encourage business</p> <p>Enhance employment and skills</p> <p>Raise the business profile</p>	<p>Children and young people</p> <p>Our vision is to enable all children and young people in Waveney to aspire to and achieve their full potential, giving them the basis for a successful life as active members of their community</p>
<p>Theme 2: A clean and safe environment</p> <p>Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour</p> <p>Provide a cleaner environment</p> <p>Provide a greener environment</p> <p>Save, protect and celebrate our heritage</p>	<p>Safer stronger and sustainable communities</p> <p>Our vision is to make Waveney an area where people regardless of age, disability, belief, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender feel safe, can contribute to the community and want to live. To minimise the short and long term impact residents and businesses have on their environment (<i>sic</i>)</p>
<p>Theme 3: A healthy and cohesive community</p> <p>Ensure a healthy community</p> <p>Govern fairly, sustainably and equitably</p> <p>Improve education and training attainments</p> <p>Promote and celebrate strong communities</p>	<p>Adults and healthier communities</p> <p>Our vision is for people in Waveney enjoy good health and well-being, to enjoy the quality of life that Waveney’s diverse district has to offer and be happy (<i>sic</i>)</p>
	<p>Economic development and enterprise</p> <p>Our vision is a place that is full of vitality where businesses and entrepreneurs want to be located. A place which has a strong sub-regional partnership with Great Yarmouth. Where there is support for economic growth and investment through joint working, and where the rural economy is thriving. Where there is economic growth and inward investment, where an emerging sector is developing and traditional industries are diversifying. To be one of Europe’s leading centres of expertise in renewable energy (<i>sic</i>)</p>

Source: Taken from Waveney Sustainable Communities Strategy – 2001-2010; and the Great Yarmouth Sustainable Community Strategy, 2007-08 (draft)

<sup>47</sup> The Great Yarmouth Sustainable Community Strategy (2007-08) – draft

<sup>48</sup> Note that the Amendment to the Core Strategy consultation document quotes the SCS and lists 5 Key Aims not

- 7.6 Although the individual Themes are presented in a highly summarised form in the Table above, in both cases, the lack of references to the coast is striking. Certainly at the level of vision and themes, the two Sustainable Community Strategies could – arguably – relate to any town anywhere. The narrative in the two SCSs includes reference to marine environments and the like, but this is presented far more in terms of “context” than in a formative sense with regard to the definition of priorities. In the Waveney SCS, for example, the comment is made that *“the coastline is continually changing, with Waveney experiencing some of the most dramatic losses of land in the country through coastal erosion. Outside the towns, the coast is generally undefended and these areas tend to coincide with areas of high landscape and wildlife value”*<sup>49</sup>. However, there is no discussion with regard to the consequences. For Great Yarmouth, the suggestion is made that *“recognition of the importance of Great Yarmouth’s offshore sub-sea environment has been less in evidence with the decline of the fishing industry from the mid 1960s”*<sup>50</sup> – implying that the connectivity with the coastal environment in the definition of local priorities has, if anything, declined.
- 7.7 At a local level, alongside the Sustainable Community Strategies, the suite of documents that together comprise the two **Local Development Frameworks** is also seriously important.
- 7.8 Waveney’s **Core Strategy** – arguably the key document within the overall LDF – was adopted in January 2009<sup>51</sup>. As a “sister” document to the SCS, a high level of read-across between the two strategies is unsurprising. And in many respects, its treatment of “the environment” is exactly analogous (so much so that much of the text under the description of “environment” appears to have been borrowed from the SCS). The Core Strategy Vision emphasises issues relating to the economy, the knowledge base, renewable energy, transport, unemployment and skills (para 3.6). At a district level, reference is made to the need to adapt to climate change – particularly coastal erosion and flood risk (para 3.9). A separate vision is provided for Lowestoft (para 3.15-3.21). The Core Strategy states that Lowestoft will accommodate 70-80% of both housing and jobs growth in the district. Against this backdrop, the focus of the vision is on urban regeneration. In this context, the need to protect against flood risk is emphasised. Additionally, specific reference is made to Lake Lothing and the Outer Harbour as key foci for mixed-use regeneration. Ness Point is also referenced in terms of a cluster for renewable energy, focused around a Power Park which will build on earlier investments in the Gulliver wind turbine and Orbis Energy.
- 7.9 Within the context of its LDF, Great Yarmouth has recently consulted on an **Amendment to the Core Strategy**<sup>52</sup>. Its vision emphasises housing and jobs growth in the context of active programmes of regeneration, and there is an emphasis on establishing Great Yarmouth as the cultural and economic heart of the wider Borough. Underpinning the vision are 13 strategic objectives which focus on regeneration and renaissance (especially brownfield waterfront redevelopment); access to services; using design and construction to create safe, healthy and accessible places; housing; facilities for leisure, recreation and tourism (including a casino); renewable energy; transport (including investments relating to the A47, a third river crossing and the rail corridor); resource use; climate change adaptation; protection of the natural

<sup>49</sup> Waveney Sustainable Communities Strategy – 2001-2010 – page 9

<sup>50</sup> Great Yarmouth Sustainable Community Strategy, 2007-08 (draft) – page 46

<sup>51</sup> Waveney Core Strategy – Adopted January 2009

<sup>52</sup> *Amendment to the Core Strategy, Local Development Framework, 2001-21* – Great Yarmouth Borough Council, 2009

environment; landscape quality; economic activity; and sustaining town and village centres. The Amendment to the Core Strategy argues that 60-70% of the Borough’s housing requirement and 80-90% of employment provision should be located in the urban areas of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. In explaining the preferred approach in relation to its Spatial Strategy, it argues that *“the key challenge for the Borough is accommodating the development needs within environmental limitations of flood risk, coastal erosion and designated nature conservation site, whilst promoting regeneration and ensuring sustainable patterns of development by improving accessibility to key services, facilities and employment opportunities”*<sup>53</sup>. However, the Sustainability Appraisal found that *“the policy has an uncertain effect on the objective to reduce the Borough’s vulnerability to climate change as the URCA area<sup>54</sup> is within areas at risk of flooding unless the development promotes improved flood defences”*.

- 7.10 Both areas are largely included within the **Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)**<sup>55</sup>. Across this geography, coastal erosion between Cromer and Happisburgh generates sediment which allows beaches to build, thereby avoiding accelerated erosion elsewhere. The SMP indicates that sediment derived from cliff erosion in north east Norfolk is crucial to the wide and healthy beach at Great Yarmouth and the expectation – set out in the SMP – is that this will continue to provide protection for most of the town. However, in making this judgment, the dynamic nature of coastal processes is acknowledged: some realignment of the shoreline north of Caister Point is needed such that material movement continues and assets in Great Yarmouth are protected. The situation in Lowestoft is reported to be rather different. Here, there is relatively little beach and the SMP sets out a requirement for substantial structures. Moreover decisions with regard to Corton (to the north) also have a bearing: the SMP argues that the shoreline at Corton should be allowed to retreat to its natural position in order to ensure a supply of sediment to various settlements including Lowestoft. This assessment is rehearsed in the report on the examination into the Waveney Core Strategy Development Plan Document: further, the point is made that with the major settlements to be defended, *“development proposals must avoid areas at risk of coastal erosion having regard to the SMP”*<sup>56</sup>.

### **Overarching regional strategies and plans**

- 7.11 At a regional scale, arguably the most important strategy is the **East of England Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy)** which relates to the period 2001-2021 and was finalised in May 2008. Within the East of England Plan, Policy SS9 – which is set out in full below – is devoted to “The Coast”. This emphasises – in roughly equal measure – the importance of the coast in terms of environmental protection and enhancement; the role of the coastal economy; and the importance of adaptation in the context of rising sea levels.

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<sup>53</sup> *Amendment to the Core Strategy, Local Development Framework, 2001-21* – Great Yarmouth Borough Council, 2009 – page 18

<sup>54</sup> Within Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the formation of an Urban Regeneration Company (URC) – 1<sup>st</sup> East – which operates across defined parts of both towns’ urban areas is another distinctive feature in terms of the definition of, and response to, local priorities. It is considered in more detail later

<sup>55</sup> The only exception to this is a small part of Lowestoft

<sup>56</sup> Waveney Core Strategy DPD Inspector’s Report 2008 – para 4.53 [n.b. see in addition page 56 of Amendment to Core Strategy Consultation for concerns in relation to social justice, etc.]

Figure 7-1: East of England Plan: Policy SS9 – The Coast: The Coast

The strategy for the coast is to adopt an integrated approach that recognises:

- its needs for environmental protection and enhancement
- the economic and social role of the region's ports, seaside towns and coastal areas important to tourism; and
- predicted sea level rise and the adaptation challenge this presents to coastal communities and decision makers.

Reflecting this approach, local planning authorities and other agencies should seek, through their plans and management strategies:

- the regeneration of coastal towns and communities, reinforcing their local economic and social roles and importance to the wider region; and
- the conservation of the coastal environment and coastal waters, including the natural character, historic environment and tranquillity of undeveloped areas, particularly in the areas of coastline and estuary designated as sites of European or international importance for wildlife.

Local Development Documents should:

- adopt policies which support the restructuring of coastal economies and the provision of jobs to satisfy local needs
- ensure, in the case of coastal resorts, that: the town centre continues to provide for local and visitor needs; improved linkages are created between the town centre and the main leisure area(s) to secure mutual strengthening of their vitality and viability; and retailing in main leisure area(s) is limited to that necessary to support the vitality and viability of the leisure function without having adverse impacts on the retail function of the town centre
- ensure that new development is compatible with shoreline management and other longer term flood management plans, so as to avoid constraining effective future flood management or increasing the need for new sea defences
- protect important coastal environmental assets, if practicable and sustainable without causing adverse impacts elsewhere. If it is not practicable to protect sites and habitats in situ, including sites of European or international importance for wildlife, shoreline management plans and development plans should include proposals for their long-term replacement and the recording of any lost historic assets
- investigate and pursue opportunities for the creation of new coastal habitats, such as salt marsh and mudflat, in areas identified for managed realignment. New development should not be permitted in such areas.

*Source: East of England Plan*

- 7.12 Within the East of England Plan, there is a range of policies in which Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are specifically identified. In particular, both are identified as Key Centres for Development and Change (Policy SS3 and Policy GYL1); as Priority Areas for Regeneration (Policy SS5); as major town centres (Policy E5); and as Regional Transport Nodes (Policy T5). Hence across the key policy statements, the two towns are clearly identified as hubs for regeneration, investment and growth and in this regard, they are certainly key nodes within the overall spatial strategy for the East of England.

Figure 7-2 : East of England Plan: Policy GYL1 – Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Key Centres for Development and Change

The strategy for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft is to promote the comprehensive regeneration of the two towns, capitalising on their strengths and protecting and enhancing their environmental assets. Local Development Documents and other strategies should pursue this strategy by:

- Promoting radical change in the economy building on the area's established sectors and diversifying into new and emerging sectors including: the renewable energy cluster, building on offshore engineering skills; a more diverse tourism cluster, based on the resort and leisure role of the towns, the proposal for a casino at Great Yarmouth and proximity to the Broads; environmental technologies and the wider environmental economy furthered by establishing a research and teaching centre supported by further and higher educational institutions and others; and port and related activities strengthening links with the rest of Europe.
- Encouraging an urban renaissance by identifying priority areas and projects for brownfield redevelopment to achieve economic, physical and social regeneration in inner urban areas and taking advantage of key waterfront sites. Priority will be given to regeneration projects that can assist in dealing with concentrations of deprivation.
- Delivering at least 11,800 additional dwellings in line with the Policy H1 to support a healthy housing market, assist the regeneration of brownfield sites and meet local affordable housing needs.
- Promoting improvements on key transport corridors into the area and between the towns, together with measures to relieve congestion, improve access to regeneration areas, and enable a significant increase in public transport, walking and cycling.

*Source: East of England Plan*

- 7.13 Within the context of the East of England Plan, the distance between Policy SS9 and Policies SS3 and GYL1 is noteworthy: the two are not necessarily in conflict, but the scope for tension is readily apparent, and clearly, the tone and focus of the two statements is quite different.
- 7.14 The **Regional Economic Strategy – *Inventing our Future*** – was published by EEDA in September 2008 and alongside the East of England Plan, it provides the second key statement of regional priorities. Its focus is strongly on sustainable economic growth – although a basket of headline indicators is identified. Within this context, the Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft area is identified as a priority for coastal renaissance. Hence the read-across to Policies SS3 and GYL1 from RSS is a strong one.

### **Overarching national strategies and plans**

- 7.15 Nationally, there is a raft of strategies and plans that apply to coastal areas in England – including Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Indeed, a study completed in 2004 by WS Atkins identified no fewer than five separate central government departments with some kind of interest in coastal management; and to this, we can now add a sixth (the newly-formed Department for Energy and Climate Change). Based on the Atkins study, the table below provides a summary.

Table 7-3

Department	Key relevant agencies	Responsibilities
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Environment Agency	Sustainable development
	Natural England	Environment protection
	Marine Management Organisation (in future)	Wildlife conservation
		Coastal defence
		Flood defence
Fisheries and water quality		
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	Regional Development Agencies	Economic performance
Department for Energy and Climate Change		Offshore oil and gas
		Offshore renewable energy
Department for Transport		Ports, harbours and shipping
Department of Communities and Local Government	Homes and Communities Agency	Land-use planning
		Aggregate extraction
		Communities in coastal areas
Ministry of Defence		Defence

*Source: WS Atkins (2004), substantially updated by SQW Consulting*

- 7.16 Included within this multi-dimensional national framework are the 25 Planning Policy Statements (or the earlier Planning Policy Guidance notes) which set out both statutory provisions and advice to local planning authorities. PPG20 was published in 1992 – some 17 years ago – with a focus on coastal planning. It explains that “*for planning purposes, as a general rule the limit of the coastal zone in the seaward direction is mean low water mark*”.

However for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, it is two of the other PPSs that have – arguably – had the most “bite” over recent years, given the issues confronting the two towns and summarised above; we return to both later. These are:

- **PPS3 – Housing:** This underpins the delivery of government’s objectives for housing and it was prepared with the aim of securing a step-change in housing delivery, following the Barker Review of Housing Supply
- **PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk:** This aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk.

7.17 Other national strategies and plans – some sectoral and some spatial – have a remit which extends a good bit further in a seaward direction, some as far as the edge of the continental shelf. Moreover many of these are nested within a policy framework with strong European Union and/or wider international components and some have a strong environmental dimension. It is in this context that the new Marine Management Organisation is likely to be formed in the future, assuming that the Marine and Coastal Access Bill (which is currently making its way through parliament) is enacted.

## II: Key coastal issues for Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft and the governance processes underpinning them

7.18 Reflecting individually and in combination on the various “layers” of strategies and plans – and taking into account the local lens-specific strategies identified earlier – five key issues were initially identified as fertile territory for an exploration of governance issues in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 7-4: First cut assessment of key issues in Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft – identified in relation to the study’s five key “lenses”

Lens	Flood risk and coastal defences	Housing and affordable housing	Transport infrastructure	Environmental asset management	Economic Regeneration
<b>Key Issue</b>					
The government’s new Marine Bill suggests that large stretches of the littoral zone are likely to receive enhanced environmental protection. In this context, major infrastructure developments like the Scroby Sands Wind Farm and East Port – both of which are likely to modify the marine environment – will require close environmental scrutiny				✓	✓
For both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, there is a major tension implicit in the relationship between physical regeneration and the management of flood risk. In both cases, major physical regeneration schemes have been prioritised in waterfront locations which are at a very high risk of flooding according to the relevant SFRA	✓	✓			✓

Lens	Flood risk and coastal defences	Housing and affordable housing	Transport infrastructure	Environmental asset management	Economic Regeneration
<b>Key Issue</b>					
<p>Both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft have seen investment in port facilities and this is linked strongly to the potential of offshore renewables. However is it possible to lever appropriate impacts without high levels of investment in the transport infrastructure – both within the towns (e.g. both argue for a third river crossing) and between the towns and other key locations (e.g. A47 Acle Straight)?</p>			✓		✓
<p>Particularly in Great Yarmouth, there is an increasing issue with regard to Houses in Multiple Occupation which has emerged as the traditional seaside tourism sector has declined. Guesthouses/hotels have been re-used, and have attracted a growing population of very vulnerable people with a high level of benefits dependency, etc. The regeneration strategy for both towns – being taken forward through 1st East – is based around physical regeneration (Lake Lothing, Outer Harbour, East Port, etc.). The “match” between the potential impacts of these projects and the challenges around a sizeable workless population (some of which is also transient) may need to be considered in relation to issues of community cohesion, etc.</p>		✓			✓
<p>The traditional seaside tourism sector in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft has been in decline for some time. One part of the response has involved proposals for a casino in Great Yarmouth – but this does not seem to sit easily with some of the social issues within the town. Another key element surrounds opportunities for leisure and tourism in areas nearby, particularly to the north and west (Broads National Park) and to the south (Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB). In both cases, there are major issues and challenges linked to reconciling access to the countryside (and its impact) and the need to protect and preserve high quality landscapes, including in relation to biodiversity</p>				✓	✓

Source: SQW Consulting

7.19 Following a series of consultations with local stakeholders, the five issues were distilled into three. All of these were considered to be intrinsically complicated and distinctively “coastal”, and across all three, processes of governance were judged to be multi-layered and intricate. Hence it was these three issues that provided the focus for a more detailed consideration of governance. In summary, the three issues were/are:

- delivering transformational physical regeneration and mixed use re-development in areas at very high risk of flooding
- sustaining major infrastructure developments within the marine environment
- addressing worklessness and building community cohesion within two towns with acute deprivation.

7.20 The issues surrounding each of these challenges – and the governance processes through which responses have been developed – are summarised in the pages that follow.

## **Transformational physical regeneration in areas of high flood risk**

### *Understanding the issues*

- 7.21 The Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils' Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provide high level overviews of the nature and extent of flood risk across the two towns. PPS25 sets out the requirement for a risk-based Sequential Test, the aim of which is to steer new development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding (Zone 1). For both towns, however, much of the area that has been earmarked for regeneration is at significant flood risk. The challenges are especially problematic in Lowestoft. The area around Lake Lothing and the Outer Harbour are identified as priorities for employment-led regeneration (including in relation to housing) but Lowestoft does not have a comprehensive flood defence system within the Lake Lothing inlet. For that reason, the lower areas of land within the town are vulnerable to tidal flooding. In Great Yarmouth, by contrast, existing defences are considered to be sufficient to protect the urban area from all but the most extreme tidal events; looking ahead, these will need to be refurbished and replaced in the context of expected rises in sea level.
- 7.22 Within the two towns there is an acute tension between the need to effect physical regeneration on the one hand, and to respond appropriately to issues of flood risk on the other. This tension has – inevitably – come to the fore over recent years with (a) the creation in 2005 of 1<sup>st</sup> East – an Urban Regeneration Company which is funded by the two district councils, the two County Councils, EEDA and Homes and Communities Agency – with a clear brief to effect comprehensive regeneration; and (b) the publication – in 2007 – of PPS25. 1<sup>st</sup> East's spatial remit does not cover the entire geography of the two towns; instead it is focused on 135ha of mainly industrial land in brownfield and waterfront locations<sup>57</sup>, and much of this area is within Flood Zone 3 (including some within Zone 3b – the functional floodplain).
- 7.23 Against this backdrop, the tension implicit between PPS3 and PPS25 has been brought into sharp relief, and it has featured strongly in all of the recent LDF preparation processes. In Great Yarmouth, the Borough Council itself asserted that "*In assessing the weight to be attached to the consideration of flooding, the Council has had also to have regard to other sustainability objectives. A balance has to be maintained between considerations of flood risk and various other sustainable development objectives including regeneration*" (*Amendment to Core Strategy Consultation, page 55*). The extent of the challenge was also observed following the public examination of the Waveney Core Strategy. Here, the Inspector concluded:

*I consider that the RSS policy sets out a very clear priority for the regeneration of the area which has been underpinned by the establishment of 1<sup>st</sup> East as a short life organisation charged specifically with the responsibility of delivering its primary elements. These are challenging priorities, not least to ensure the employment-led regeneration of Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area, an area of historic economic decline and limited accessibility by road, while dealing with the effects of climate*

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<sup>57</sup> This is focused on lake Lothing, the Fish Dock and Ness point in Lowestoft, and Runham Vauxhall, North Quay, Cobholm, Southtown, South Quay and South Denes in Great Yarmouth

*change in terms of rising sea levels and associated flood risk management needs*<sup>58</sup>.

*The governance processes through which solutions are being developed*

7.24 Across this domain, the process of governance has principally and variously involved:

- the **two Local Planning Authorities** (Waveney District Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council) - whose responsibilities include, *inter alia*, developing and delivering their Local Development Frameworks and the raft of economic, social and environmental priorities within them; and fulfilling management responsibilities in relation to some sea walls and flood defences
- **Suffolk County Council** and **Norfolk County Council** – which are Section 4(4) Authorities and are key members of the Sub-Regional Group (which also includes the district councils and the Broads Authority) which developed the sub-regional strategy for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft
- the **Environment Agency** - which has statutory responsibility for flood management and defence in England and is charged with “*supporting the planning system by providing timely information and advice on flooding issues that is fit for purpose*”; it advises on the preparation of SFRAs and is a statutory consultee for LDDs and for planning applications in flood risk areas; it has the power (but not the legal obligation) to manage flood risk from designated main rivers and the sea<sup>59</sup>; and since 2008, the Environment Agency has had a strategic overview role for all flood and coastal erosion risk management
- **1<sup>st</sup> East** (the Urban Regeneration Company) – which has a specific remit to “*transform the brownfield and waterfront areas of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth*”
- **private sector developers** - which need to be encouraged to invest in key development opportunities
- the **Government Office for the East of England** (and both **Defra** and **CLG**, including – at times – at ministerial level) - which has played a key role with regard to development proposals that are “called in” and has also offered advice in relation to PPS3, PPS25 and the relationship between them
- the **East of England Development Agency** - which has funded key projects within the URC area including, for example, Waveney Campus in Lowestoft (which is considered further below).

7.25 Across this group of bodies, there was evidence from our consultations and workshop to suggest that the process of resolving the inevitable tensions implicit in seeking to deliver physical regeneration within an area of – mainly – high flood risk is far from complete. At

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<sup>58</sup> Waveney Core Strategy DPD Inspector’s Report 2008 – para 4.89

<sup>59</sup> In Great Yarmouth (but not Lowestoft), the Environment Agency has direct management responsibility for some flood defences

the same time, there was general agreement that significant progress has been made over recent years.

- 7.26 One example (cited several times during our consultations) concerned proposals for Waveney Campus – a flagship initiative for Lowestoft located to the south of Lake Lothing. Initially the proposal for Waveney Campus met with objections from the Environment Agency; in the main, these related to the site's location in an area of high flood risk (Zone 3b). "Land raising" was proposed as part of a solution; in essence, this simply involves elevating a site to a height at which the threat of flooding is substantially reduced. However proposals for land raising met with concerns as to the consequential impacts in relation to the remainder of the functional floodplain. A technical study was therefore commissioned by 1<sup>st</sup> East to examine the cumulative impact of land raising. The study's key finding – that land raising would not increase flood risks elsewhere – was validated by the Environment Agency. In the light of this, an addendum to the SFRA was drafted, suggesting that the wider scale land-raising of potential development sites in the Lake Lothing flood cell would lift development ground levels above predicted flood levels<sup>60</sup>. This in turn allowed for a reclassification of the site from 3b to 3a and – given that the proposed uses were at least in part water compatible (i.e. linked to the housing of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)) – objections to the Waveney Campus development were withdrawn. In early 2009, the proposed Waveney Campus was awarded full planning permission by the Local Planning Authority.
- 7.27 To some extent at least, the Waveney Campus example is illustrative of a more general governance challenge surrounding development within the high flood risk areas of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Reference has already been made to PPS25 which was published by government in 2007 – well after 1<sup>st</sup> East was formed as a response to the area's regeneration imperatives that had previously been agreed through the two local authorities. Within PPS25, no real distinction is made between different types of flood risk; specifically, fluvial and tidal flood risk are treated as one. Yet the argument is made locally that because the nature of fluvial and tidal flood events is quite different, the planning policy response ought also to be nuanced. This is all the more important – it is suggested – because of PPS3 and its requirements for accelerated rates of housing supply. For both towns, the housing targets set out in Policy H1 of the East of England Plan are high relative to that which has been achieved over the recent past and there is limited land supply; even though they are within areas at high or very high flood risk, the brownfield sites that are providing the focus for 1<sup>st</sup> East's work will need to contribute if the government's housing targets are to stand any chance of being achieved. Hence there is an implicit – but deep seated tension – in seeking to respond to both elements of the national policy framework simultaneously.
- 7.28 In explaining the progress that has been made, our consultees did not point to formal mechanisms and processes, or established partnership groupings, or even to their statutory powers and responsibilities (although most had some). Instead, there appeared to be some consensus that potentially irreconcilable differences and stand-offs – notably between the Environment Agency, the LPAs and 1<sup>st</sup> East – were overcome because key officers from the main agencies/organisations were pragmatic, co-operative and worked hard to "find a way

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<sup>60</sup> Waveney Core Strategy DPD Inspector's Report 2008 – para 4.57-4.59

through”. Whilst this was facilitated by the active involvement of the MP for Lowestoft, the overall view was that if the key people from the principal agencies/organisations wanted something to happen, then usually a way forward could be found: the Waveney Campus example was a case in point.

- 7.29 That said, however, the assessment should not be too sanguine; some critical questions certainly remain. For one, land values in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are amongst the lowest in the region. Land raising is an effective technical solution to the problem of flood risk in parts of the area, but it adds significantly to the cost to the development process. In the context of an economic slump and credit crunch, can the private sector afford to invest in such technical solutions and is it willing to do so without significant public sector intervention? Even if it can, the consequence, presumably, is reduced developer contributions (through section 106 agreements) which ought to be seriously important in financing supporting infrastructures (including affordable housing, social and community infrastructures, and so on). And with tightening public sector finances, how viable therefore is the development route prescribed for the two towns? A review of the flagship developments in both towns illustrates just how important public sector spend – from both European and national/regional sources – has been: Orbis Energy, the Outer Harbour, Eastport, InteGREAT Yarmouth, Waveney Sunrise, etc. There is clear evidence of acute regeneration need within the two towns and the underlying rationale for intervention is not in question, but is the development path – to which the establishment of 1<sup>st</sup> East has been the organisational response – financially sustainable into the medium term, given the prospect of a savage comprehensive spending review immediately following the general election? In terms of governance – and the processes through which “things are made to happen” – this question is an important one for the two towns.
- 7.30 Linked to this, there is further evidence to suggest that funding from the Environment Agency is in seriously short supply, particularly in Lowestoft. Funding formulae determined by Defra (at central government level) dictate that the Environment Agency must prioritise its spend to protect existing homes – not to safeguard those that might be built in the future. In Lowestoft, investment is required primarily in relation to future development<sup>61</sup> and for that reason, the Environment Agency is not in a position to use its capital fund to help with the abnormal development costs that go hand-in-hand with land raising.

### ***Major infrastructure developments within the marine environment***

#### *Understanding the issues*

- 7.31 The marine environment in the environs of both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft features strongly – although in some respects quite awkwardly – in relation to key local decisions and decision-making processes. This paradox is a feature of both towns and the underlying causes and consequences are important in terms of coastal governance more generally.
- 7.32 For Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, two infrastructure developments within the marine environment have been especially important over recent years. In both cases, these are

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<sup>61</sup> The situation in Great Yarmouth is different because funding is needed in relation to existing development

consistently flagged in local and regional strategy as absolutely critical catalysts for economic regeneration and growth:

- **offshore renewables:** Licensed by The Crown Estate, the Scroby Sands offshore windfarm is located 2.5km off the coast of Great Yarmouth. It was commissioned in 2004 and is now operational. The construction of its thirty 2-megawatt turbines was serviced from Great Yarmouth – although a study commissioned by Renewables East concluded that of total expenditure of £80 million linked to the development, construction and initial five years operation of the Scroby Sands offshore wind farm, no more than £12.8m (16%) was likely to originate within the East of England<sup>62</sup>. The windfarm is linked to the onshore energy infrastructure through three 33kV electrical circuits which connect the turbines to the local 33Kv distribution network at Admiralty Road substation in Great Yarmouth<sup>63</sup>
- **ports:** Associated British Ports (ABP) took over the operations of the *Port of Lowestoft* in 1997. Over the subsequent 6 years, it invested £20m in port facilities which include container, bulk and general-cargo handling<sup>64</sup>. The Port of Lowestoft also serves as a major centre for servicing the offshore oil and gas industry, and the construction and shipment of wind-energy turbines. Over the recent past, the major new investment has been focused on *EastPort* (Great Yarmouth): to complement existing river facilities, there has been substantial investment in a new *Outer Harbour*<sup>65</sup> and the intention is that the port should provide a new container terminal and deep-water facilities. The legal basis for the investment in EastPort was the Great Yarmouth Outer Harbour (No. 2) Revision Order 2005<sup>66</sup>.

7.33 In response to both marine infrastructure investments, across both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft there have been concerted efforts to develop the potential synergies and potentials. OrbisEnergy was opened in November 2008 as a flagship building for renewable wind, wave and tidal power. More recently, proposals have been advanced for the formation of a 'Power Park' between Ness Point and Hamilton Dock (Lowestoft); this will host a cluster of businesses with skilled workers in the traditional energy and the emerging renewable energy sectors. A partnership – including 1<sup>st</sup> East, Waveney District Council, East of England Development Agency, Suffolk County Council, East of England Energy Group, Renewables East, Associated British Ports and SLP Limited – has been formed to oversee its implementation. In addition, in April 2009, ABP announced that the Port of Lowestoft would become the temporary operations centre for the Greater Gabbard Offshore Windfarm. Taking into account investments of this type, it has been estimated that an offshore wind-power

<sup>62</sup> *Scroby Sands – Supply Chain Analysis* Report to Renewables East by Douglas Westwood Limited, 2005

<sup>63</sup> *Offshore Wind Capital Grants Scheme – Scroby Sands Offshore Wind Farm – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report* – published by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

<sup>64</sup> Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth Urban Regeneration Company Masterplan – Baseline Report, Halcrow, 2006

<sup>65</sup> Public sector funding has been as follows: £8.6 million (East of England Development Agency), £4.6 million (European Regional Development Fund), £3.1 million (Norfolk County Council) will part-fund the maritime access works, with Great Yarmouth Borough Council providing support in kind through lease of land valued at £1.6 million (see <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/71212w0003.htm>)

<sup>66</sup> This Order provided for the repeal of section 35 of the Great Yarmouth Outer Harbour Act 1986. Previously, this section prohibited the use of ship passenger and goods dues from the existing harbour for the purposes of the construction and operation of the Outer Harbour (see <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20052602.htm>, Crown Copyright, 2005)

cluster could generate 3,000-4,000 jobs (in the period to 2010)<sup>67</sup>. Across Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the potential for economic growth on this scale is seriously important.

- 7.34 However, in seeking to realise this potential, there both continuing – and emerging – challenges. Two were identified in the course of our consultations.
- 7.35 One major issue concerns the **connecting on-shore road infrastructure**. Both towns are remote and poorly linked to elsewhere – including each other. In Great Yarmouth, a Third River Crossing over the Yare is seen as critical in relation to new development at EastPort and the regeneration of the town while the A47 Acle Straight (Great Yarmouth – Norwich) has long been a transport priority. In Lowestoft, a Third Crossing of Lake Lothing which would alleviate congestion on Bascule Bridge is also considered to be crucially important<sup>68</sup>. All of these transport priorities have been flagged repeatedly, but none of the schemes have moved successfully towards implementation; indeed, none of the schemes linked to the regeneration of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft (and intrinsically related to the ports and offshore renewables clusters) found their way into the East of England's Regional Funding Advice (2009).
- 7.36 A second issue – this one still emerging – relates to the **offshore movement of sediment**. The view is that this *may* be being disrupted by developments at both EastPort and Scroby Sands. Although the extent of the issue is not currently known, there is some local concern with regard to the possible consequences. Potentially, these include the accelerated erosion of Gorleston Beach. This is functionally important in terms of flood defence – and as argued above, the management of flood risk is already a major governance challenge. But the beach is also a major asset in relation to the sub-region's tourism industry and it is an important and valued amenity for local people<sup>69</sup>.

*The governance processes through which solutions are being developed*

- 7.37 Across this raft of inter-related processes, a very wide range of agencies and organisations is engaged in making decisions. Currently, this includes:
- **The Crown Estate** – which is responsible for managing the property of the Crown and is accountable to Parliament. As landowner of the seabed and areas of foreshore (under The Crown Estate Act, 1961), The Crown Estate's permission is needed to place structures on, or pass cables over, the seabed and its foreshore. Once statutory consents from a number of government departments are in place, The Crown Estate is able to grant leases for offshore wind development
  - **E.On UK** (the windfarm operator at Scroby Sands) – which makes commercial decisions with regard to the rate and scale of investment in offshore capacity
  - **EastPort UK and Associated British Ports (ABP)** – which are the ports authorities for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft respectively, with responsibilities linked to navigation, dredging and permitted development, and with the ability to make investment decisions

<sup>67</sup> Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth Urban Regeneration Company Masterplan – Baseline Report, Halcrow, 2006

<sup>68</sup> Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth Urban Regeneration Company Masterplan – Baseline Report, Halcrow, 2006

<sup>69</sup> See <http://www.gorlestonbeach.org.uk/index.php>

- **Waveney District and Great Yarmouth Borough Councils** – which, *inter alia*, are the Local Planning Authorities with regard to on-shore development and consultees with regard to development off-shore
- **Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils** – which, *inter alia*, are the local transport authorities with responsibility for Local Transport Plans (and also the Section 4(4) authorities with regard to spatial planning)
- **Highways Agency** – which is the agency of the Department for Transport with responsibility for managing the strategic road network in England
- **Environment Agency** – which is the body responsible for flood and coastal erosion risk management (see above)
- Various central government departments, notably **Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs** (which has responsibilities, *inter alia*, for consents linked to navigational issues, deposits, extractions, etc.), **Department for Energy and Climate Change** (which is now responsible for UK energy policy, and for the licensing of electricity infrastructure) and **Department for Transport** (which has responsibility for ports)
- **Cefas** – which provides advice on fisheries and coastal processes
- **Renewables East and East of England Energy Group** – which are regional-level partnerships which were formed to promote renewable energy and the energy sector.

7.38 Through our consultations and workshops, various governance challenges were identified in which some or all of these agencies/organisations were implicated in the context of major, on-going, infrastructural developments within the marine environment adjacent to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. In terms, specifically, of coastal governance, three appear to be particularly important.

7.39 First, in terms of governance, our consultees were unable to point to any real relationship – and no real mechanism for a relationship – between the development of offshore renewables and the provision of a supporting onshore infrastructure. Currently, the key decision-makers with regard to the former appear to be DECC and The Crown Estate together with the relevant windfarm operator. And in this regard, an extract from The Crown Estate’s website – under the heading “Working Together” – provides some important insights:

*Being a new marine industry we are encouraging offshore windfarm developers to establish good working relationships with the existing marine community and other sea users. We hope the offshore renewables energy sector will benefit from the experience of others such as the oil and gas sector and the marine aggregates industry in addressing emerging environmental issues such as cumulative and in-combination effects. Developers are also working together in regional groups to address common issues; BERR have established liaison groups with specific interests such as navigation and fishing. The British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) is the trade association that represents the industry. It acts as a central point for information and as a lobbying group to*

*promote wind energy to government and provide a forum for the UK wind industry*<sup>70</sup>.

- 7.40 While clearly recognising the importance of “Working Together”, nowhere in this narrative is there any reference at all to the coastal communities that are – effectively – supporting the offshore endeavour, or the need to engage with them. Yet there must be “on shore consequences”. Most immediately, there is the point at which offshore cables join the onshore energy infrastructure (in this case at the Admiralty Road substation in Great Yarmouth<sup>71</sup>); and in this context, there is a statutory need for dialogue with the local planning authority. But there may be a raft of other impacts – the traffic generated to service the construction process, the demand for more or different skills in the local workforce, the need to provide housing for those workers, and so on. If the offshore facility was located on land, it would fall within the jurisdiction of local planning processes through which there would be some level of accountability to local elected members and hence to local people<sup>72</sup>. Moreover, as a sizeable commercial venture gaining commercial value from – effectively – a “land” designation, some level of developer contribution would probably be expected. This in turn would help to fund supporting infrastructure – whether that be an access road, additional affordable housing, social and community facilities, or whatever. But with the offshore development on the seaward side of the mean low water mark, it is not clear that any mechanism currently exists to extract contributions of this nature, yet this ought – arguably – to be a part of sustainable governance in coastal communities<sup>73</sup>.
- 7.41 The offshore sediment issues referenced above constitute a second area in which distinctive coastal governance processes appear to be at work. Through our consultations, the point was made that proposals in relation to the Outer Harbour at Great Yarmouth were opposed, on environmental grounds, for many years. Eventually, a legal agreement was reached whereby liability for any adverse environmental impacts would rest with the port operator, EastPort. On this basis, objections were withdrawn and the development went forward. The agreement was that close environmental monitoring would take place, accompanied by regular assessment and reporting. During our consultations, local stakeholders expressed some concern that (to their knowledge) this monitoring has not (yet) taken place and hence the evidence that was promised has not been forthcoming. There was also a suggestion that beach levels are dropping. For some local stakeholders at least, the question arose as to the relationship between the two. It is very early days with all of this and there may, in fact, be no problem (as sediment, by its nature, moves continuously). But – at this point in time – the apparent lack of monitoring information was identified as a concern locally (if only because it raised doubts). *If* the problem is found to be a real one and *if* the cause of the problem is shown to be the new Outer Harbour, then EastPort will need to respond as part of the Harbour Revision Order. Our understanding is that it is the Department for Transport that will ultimately need to hold EastPort to account.

<sup>70</sup> [http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/print/our\\_portfolio/marine/offshore\\_wind\\_energy.htm](http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/print/our_portfolio/marine/offshore_wind_energy.htm)

<sup>71</sup> We understand that cables from any major offshore wind farm are likely to make land fall at Sizewell

<sup>72</sup> Note however that PPS22 (Renewable Energy) is remarkably dismissive in relation to offshore renewables. It simply states that “as the land use planning system does not extend offshore, the policies do not apply to developments for offshore renewables”. Within PPS22, no further reference to offshore renewables is provided

<sup>73</sup> Note however that the Planning Bill currently before Parliament proposes the creation of an Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) which would be the planning authority for certain types of projects, including offshore proposals over 100MW. (see <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldselect/lddeucom/175/17507.htm#a21>)

- 7.42 A third set of issues related to the apparent disconnect between decisions to invest in infrastructure in the marine environment, and decisions with regard to on-shore infrastructure, particularly transport. For many locally stakeholders, this simply represents a failure of governance. As discussed above, there is no mechanism through which off-shore “developers” (whether offshore wind farm operators or, for that matter, the ports authorities) are required to make “developer contributions” (in the way that Tesco would be required to, if it was granted permission to build a superstore). But the disconnect appears to go further: at a strategic level, there appears to be no mechanism for ensuring that investment in infrastructure in the marine environment is a catalyst for – or even a material consideration in relation to – on-shore transport prioritisation. At a regional scale, this is particularly apparent. With regard to transport, the East of England’s 2009 Regional Funding Advice was informed by a regional prioritisation exercise that was in turn informed by the Stern Report and the Government’s response to it<sup>74</sup>; the Eddington Transport Study; and the Government’s five goals for transport as outlined in the DfT’s ‘Delivering a Sustainable Transport System’ (DaSTS) strategy. This is not a “bad” basis for prioritisation in the context of very limited resources; but it provides no real scope for an interface with regard to major new capital investments in the marine environment.

### **Addressing worklessness and building community cohesion**

#### *Understanding the issues*

- 7.43 Within Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft – but particularly the former – there is ample evidence to suggest that worklessness continues to be a major challenge. Official figures from May 2008 suggest 10,640 claimants from a working age population of 54,400, implying a worklessness rate in Great Yarmouth of 19.6%; the comparable figure for the East of England is 10.8%<sup>75</sup>.
- 7.44 Across both towns, the causes of worklessness are complex and deep-seated. One factor – referenced in the *Sub-Regional Housing Strategy for Great Yarmouth and Waveney, 2005 and beyond* – reflects the decline in the tourism industry, the lapse of hotels/guesthouses into use as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and, consequently, the in-migration of a large transient population of vulnerable people. But the causes and challenges go further and deeper: the strong seasonality of available employment is one factor and the high incidence of people with mental health problems amongst those on incapacity benefit is another<sup>76</sup>.
- 7.45 In response, the Local Strategic Partnerships for both Great Yarmouth and Waveney have – through their Sustainable Community Strategies – emphasised the need to address the raft of surrounding issues (see paragraph 7.5):

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<sup>74</sup> See ‘Towards a Sustainable Transport System: Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World’ (TaSTS), Department for Transport, 2008

<sup>75</sup> Commissioning Great Yarmouth’s Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Needs Analysis – see [http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/13-Spirals\\_Needs\\_Analysis\\_B1\\_and\\_B2.doc](http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/13-Spirals_Needs_Analysis_B1_and_B2.doc)

<sup>76</sup> Commissioning Great Yarmouth’s Working Neighbourhoods Fund – Needs Analysis: Conclusions – see [http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/13-Spirals\\_Needs\\_Analysis\\_B3\\_B4\\_C.doc](http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/13-Spirals_Needs_Analysis_B3_B4_C.doc)

- in Great Yarmouth “enhancing employment and skills” is one objective while “improving education and training attainments” is a second<sup>77</sup>
- for Waveney, one of the desired outcomes is described in terms of “more jobs available locally, and a higher proportion of local people young and old in those jobs. Where there is training and skills matching for local people to get jobs. Support for people facing barriers to work such as provision of reliable and affordable childcare so more parents and carers can take advantage of job opportunities”<sup>78</sup>.

7.46 Across all of this, there is a key, over-arching, challenge in ensuring that the agreed strategy for effecting regeneration and growth – summarised in the two Local Development Frameworks and being implemented through the work of 1<sup>st</sup> East in particular – is engaging with the needs, skills and aspirations of local people, particularly those who are currently experiencing worklessness. Notwithstanding the volume of public sector investment that has found its way into the two towns, there is little real evidence to suggest that the scale of deprivation is declining, either relatively or absolutely.

*The governance processes through which solutions are being developed*

7.47 Across this domain, the principal agencies and organisations impacting on decisions made with regard to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft include:

- **Local Strategic Partnerships** for Great Yarmouth and Waveney – which are responsible for developing the two areas’ Sustainable Community Strategies and overseeing their implementation
- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** and **Waveney District Council** – which are the Local Planning Authorities; have statutory functions in respect of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and have non-statutory responsibilities with regard to economic development
- **Suffolk County Council** and **Norfolk County Council** – which are responsible for delivering social services; are the local education authorities (with new responsibilities in relation to 14-19 provision); are the local transport authorities (which may be critical in terms of access to work); are Section 4(4) authorities with regard to spatial planning; and are shortly to have a statutory duty to prepare local Economic Assessments (LEAs) which require some consideration of worklessness
- **Jobcentre Plus** – which is an agency of the Department for Work and Pensions with responsibility for supporting people of working age from welfare into work, and helping employers to fill their vacancies
- **East of England Development Agency** – which is an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and was set up with five statutory objectives, including: to further economic development and regeneration; to promote

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/18-Community-Strategy-07.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Waveney Sustainable Communities Strategy, 2007-10 [http://www.waveney.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C4518302-B935-4907-9987-C37A1BC80F3C/0/waveney\\_sustainable\\_communities\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.waveney.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C4518302-B935-4907-9987-C37A1BC80F3C/0/waveney_sustainable_communities_strategy.pdf)

employment; and to enhance the development and application of skills relevant to employment

- **Great Yarmouth and Waveney Primary Care Trust** – which has responsibility for commissioning primary health care services
- A wide range of **Voluntary and Community Sector** bodies and organisations, many of which have a key delivery role
- Various central government departments, including **Communities and Local Government** and **Department for Work and Pensions**, which have made available £7.1m to Great Yarmouth, under the *Working Neighbourhoods Fund*, over three years. The aims of this are to reduce worklessness, increase employment and increase skills in deprived neighbourhoods. An **Employment and Skills Group** is advising the Board of the **LSP** on the use of these resources. Its membership includes **Great Yarmouth Borough Council; Community Connections; Business Link; Jobcentre Plus; Community & Neighbourhood Management Team; Learning Skills Council; Chamber of Commerce; Primary Care Trust; Connexions; Great Yarmouth Voluntary Sector Partnership; iC Management Team Representative; and an LSP Officer**<sup>79</sup>.

7.48 Through our consultations and workshop, there was some (although compared to the other two issues, relatively limited) consideration of the processes of governance – interpreted to include powers, influence and funding/resources – across this broad domain. Two overarching comments were made:

- Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft have been really quite successful in attracting funding over recent years and a large number of projects have been funded as a result: for example, in the last two years of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (predecessor to the Working Neighbourhoods Fund), some 77 different projects shared funding of £4m<sup>80</sup>
- but despite this – and whatever metrics are used – there are still high levels of deprivation and worklessness.

7.49 In terms of governance there is a further implicit concern. It surrounds the relationship between the physical regeneration strategy for the two towns – underpinned by the two LDFs and focused on the brownfield and waterfront sites within the bailiwick of 1<sup>st</sup> East – and the challenges of addressing deep-seated worklessness: will the first provide a solution to the second or might the two processes be conflicting?

7.50 This question is extremely difficult to answer. We can however make one observation which – although obvious – is important in terms of governance. The physical regeneration strategy for the two towns is a medium term venture in terms of timescale; it is premised around sites which are challenging in development terms, there are very few “quick fixes”, and the target for its delivery is informed strongly by the timescales of spatial planning (at regional and

<sup>79</sup> GY Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) Briefing Paper 1, 2008

<sup>80</sup> [http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/9-NRF\\_2006\\_-\\_2008\\_-\\_A\\_FINAL\\_REPORT\\_rcd.pdf](http://www.gylsp.org.uk/uploads/DOCS/9-NRF_2006_-_2008_-_A_FINAL_REPORT_rcd.pdf)

local levels). The time horizon for the two Sustainable Community Strategies is similar. However, the specific interventions with a focus on worklessness are very much smaller in both scale and timescale: 77 projects sharing £4m suggests an average size of about £50,000, and even for the new Working Neighbourhoods Fund, the timescale for delivery is three years. There is, therefore, a clear misalignment in terms of timescales. In terms of governance, this will present some challenges.

### III: Coastal governance in Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft

#### **Conclusions from the case study on the process of governance**

7.51 The three key issues considered above differ substantially from one another. Yet all three are real and current within the context of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, and all three provide some important insights in terms of the processes through which decisions are made. Looking across all three – and **focusing hard on the process of governance (whether through the use of powers, resources/funding or influence), rather than the underlying issues** – what appears to determine the effectiveness of existing decision-making processes<sup>81</sup>? We make five key observations:

- first, conflicts with regard to decision-making appear to be resolvable when the parties concerned are “informed pragmatists”. Pragmatism appears to derive – predominantly – from good working relationships between individual officers. These in turn appear to be founded on a high degree of personal respect (and continuity of relationships is therefore important), coupled with a strong mutual understanding of the “ground rules” within which solutions need to be found. The *quid pro quo* is that if different parties genuinely do not understand the different sets of “ground rules” within which each is operating, informed decisions are unlikely to be made
- second, the engagement of elected local authority members and/or Members of Parliament appears to be seriously important in effective decision-making, but this needs to be a formative part of the process: imposed solutions, even if they are imposed successfully, are unlikely ever to be embedded solutions (in the sense that consequential actions and interventions are intelligently shaped by them)
- third, transparency is important and linked to this, good governance relies on partners honouring commitments – and doing what they said they would do. In our Great Yarmouth / Lowestoft case study, this appeared to be all the more important when there was genuine uncertainty as to the potential “unintended consequences” deriving from complicated – and contentious – investment decisions
- fourth, decisions are unlikely to be optimal when they potentially generate downstream costs; where the burden of those costs falls on another party; and where that party had little or no involvement in the original decision. This suggests that there ought to be a stronger “alignment of accountabilities”, particularly when the impacts are geographically concentrated

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<sup>81</sup> Note that this is not a commentary on the merits of the outcome but a series of observations on the process(es) through which issues are resolved

- fifth, inter-related decisions are unlikely to be optimal if the timescales to which those decisions relate are radically different.

### **Wider observations and reflections on the case study**

- 7.52 By way of conclusion, it is perhaps useful to make some wider observations on the processes of coastal governance that have emerged through this case study, reflecting particularly on the strategic framework that was described at the start of this chapter.
- 7.53 One immediate comment is that – aside from paragraph 7.10 – there has been no reference at all in terms of governance to Shoreline Management Plans, yet Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are, intrinsically, coastal towns and sea levels are rising. Our view is that the reason for this paradox reflects the underlying presumption that existing development in major settlements like Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft will be defended: *“due to the high value and extent of socio-economic assets”*, the policy set out in the Shoreline Management Plan is to *“hold the line through maintaining/replacing existing defences”*. Hence the financial and other risks linked to uncertainties surrounding the management of the shoreline have been dissipated to such an extent that – perversely – a meaningful engagement with the implicit issues simply does not take place. Indeed, from a cursory reading of the two Sustainable Community Strategies, the fact of a coastal location could easily be overlooked.
- 7.54 Second, for Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft, there are, effectively, three planning regimes in close proximity but with very under-developed interfaces between them: the on-shore spatial planning system (with strong links to GO-East, but reporting ultimately to CLG), the planning processes linked to the port (with accountabilities to DfT), and the decision-making processes linked to offshore renewables (influenced strongly by The Crown Estate and DECC). The interfaces between these domains are seriously important at a local level, but there really is no mechanism to (a) make them articulate meaningfully and in a way that (b) demands any level of local democratic accountability. In this context, the (potential) misalignment between costs (local) and benefits (national) may need particular consideration.

## 8: North Norfolk

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### Background

- 8.1 This case study is based on the District of North Norfolk, which is described in the Local Development Framework Core Policy as follows:

*North Norfolk is a large rural area of some 87,040 hectares (340 square miles) (excluding Broads Authority Area) situated on the northern periphery of the East of England Region. The nearby urban area and major economic, social and cultural centre of Norwich (approximate population nearly 280,000), situated some 35 km (22 miles) to the south of Cromer, exerts a significant influence over parts of the district. The towns of King's Lynn (pop. 33,730), situated 34 km (20 miles) to the west of Fakenham and Great Yarmouth (pop. 46,780), situated 25 km (16 miles) to the south-east of Stalham, are the other principal neighbouring settlements, but their impact on the district is more limited. Despite the relationship with Norwich, there is a high degree of live/work self-containment in the district with 73% of residents employed within the district.*

*The district has 73 km (45 miles) of North Sea coastline between Holkham in the west and Horsey in the south-east. The vast majority of this is very attractive and parts of the coast and surrounding rural landscapes are nationally recognised in the designation of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the North Norfolk Heritage Coast. The east of the district surrounds and provides a gateway to the Norfolk Broads, a unique area of internationally recognised wetlands. North Norfolk is also important for its biodiversity and areas of nature conservation interest. In particular the north coast stretching from Weybourne in the east, westwards along to the boundary with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk in the west is of international importance for wildlife habitats.*

*Whilst the coastal area plays a major role in creating North Norfolk's distinctive environment and is important to the economy through tourism, it also presents two significant challenges. The first emanates from the fact that North Norfolk's cliffed coastline between Kelling Hard (near Weybourne) and Cart Gap (near Happisburgh), which is made of soft glacial deposits, has been eroding since the last Ice Age. The second concerns the low-lying coastline either side of the cliffs, which is at risk from tidal flooding.*

- 8.2 North Norfolk has a relatively "old" population: average age is 45 compared to 39 across the UK. The skills base in North Norfolk generally is regarded as low to poor. Across many areas of North Norfolk, recreation and tourism are the mainstay of the economy. Three areas outside the major urban areas (Wells, Mundesley and Holt) are classified as areas of multiple deprivation.
- 8.3 The UK Climate Impacts Programme data suggests that by 2080, the East of England will experience more extreme conditions in terms of more intense rainfall and stronger winds in

the winter and less rainfall and more heatwaves in the summer. The key impacts identified in the Atkins report (2007)<sup>82</sup> are: an increase in tidal and fluvial flood risk and huge increases in the associated costs; probable sea level rise of 0.4m (meaning a large increase in the number of properties and agricultural land at risk on the east coast); and water shortages in view of rising demand and diminishing supply. This is likely to pose particular challenges in terms of infrastructure, health, insurance premiums, agriculture, the natural environment and quality of life for communities.

## I: Key elements of the policy context

### ***Local, regional and national strategies and plans***

#### *North Norfolk Sustainable Community Strategy*

8.4 The North Norfolk Sustainable Community Strategy (NNSCS) 2008-11, based on local consultation, describes the critical issues as housing affordability, employment opportunities, learning and skills and the local economy, along with environmental issues such as coastal erosion and public transport. Amongst these, the four 'top priorities' are:

- affordable decent housing
- job prospects, wages and education
- public transport
- health.

8.5 Aside from the mention of coastal erosion (outside of these four top priorities), the NNSCS is not particularly 'coastal' in terms of a pre-occupation with the sea, although the North Norfolk Community Partnership (NNCP) would perhaps argue that what concerns and indeed partly defines coastal communities are these socio-economic challenges.

8.6 The actions of the NNCP and the seven Local Area Partnerships with which it works reflect the Community Strategy priorities. Thus they support affordable housing projects, business support, employment and skills initiatives, leisure opportunities for young people and improving public transport. The level of funding directly available for delivering the NNSCS is relatively small, although the Strategy and the Partnership is meant to influence the spend of partners and the content of the wider Norfolk Local Area Agreement.

#### *Local Development Framework*

8.7 The Core Strategy and Development Control Policies guide other documents in the North Norfolk Local Development Framework such as the Site Specific Proposals document by identifying where, when, and how new development will take place in North Norfolk up to 2021. In its 'key issues and challenges', the LDF Core Strategy repeats those from the NNSCS and adds protection of the environment, the challenge of climate change, coastal erosion and flood risk, as particular concerns in North Norfolk.

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<sup>82</sup> Cited in the Norfolk LAA as Atkins Report 2007

- 8.8 The challenge recognised in the Core Strategy is to devise ways to ensure that the carbon footprint of existing and new development is reduced and to build new developments in a way that adapts to inevitable changes to the climate. Climate change is expected to create both opportunities and threats; warmer summers leading to water shortages but also an increased demand for leisure and tourism and new challenges for agriculture; whilst wetter winters and rising sea levels will increase coastal flooding and erosion.
- 8.9 The full length of North Norfolk's coastline is considered at risk from tidal flooding or subject to cliff erosion. In addition, much of the inland area at the south-eastern end of North Norfolk, around the Rivers Ant, Bure and Thurne and their associated broads, and including all or parts of a number of villages such as Hoveton, Hickling and Ludham, is at risk from either fluvial (river) or tidal flooding. Sea level rise and coastal erosion will also have impacts on biodiversity and coastal geology and measures need to be taken to enable wildlife to adapt to future changes. These challenges give rise to 6 core aims in the LDF core strategy:
- address housing needs
  - provide for sustainable development and mitigate and adapt to climate change
  - protect the built and natural environment and local distinctive identity of North Norfolk, and enable people's enjoyment of this resource
  - mitigate and adapt to impacts of coastal erosion and flooding
  - develop a strong, high value economy to provide better job, career and training opportunities
  - improve access for all to jobs, services, leisure and cultural activities.
- 8.10 The spatial strategy to implement these aims includes:
- concentrating development in *Principal Settlements* (i.e. Cromer, Holt, Fakenham and North Walsham accommodating approximately 75% of new employment land and 50% of new homes); limited development in *Secondary Settlements* (Hoveton, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-next-the-Sea); small development in *Service Villages* and a presumption against development in the countryside
  - supporting renewable energy proposals where impacts on amenity, wildlife and landscape are acceptable
  - minimising exposure of people and property to the risks of coastal erosion and flooding and planning for a sustainable shoreline in the long-term, that balances the natural coastal processes with the environmental, social and economic needs of the area
  - provide at least 4,000 additional jobs between 2001 and 2021 in line with the indicative targets set out in the East of England Plan. Job growth will be achieved via policies for tourism, retail and the rural economy as well as provision of employment land

- maximise the use of non-car modes (within the context of a rural area where, for many trips, there are limited alternatives to the car).

8.11 The LDF Core Strategy goes on to detail plans for primary and secondary settlements and to set out Development Control Policies to guide planning decisions.

#### *Shoreline Management Plans*

8.12 A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal change and presents policies to address these risks. It is a non-statutory policy document intended to inform wider strategic planning.

8.13 The eastern stretch of the North Norfolk coast from Kelling to Happisburgh, Eccles and beyond is covered by the Kelling to Lowestoft Ness SMP. A separate SMP for the coastline between Kelling Hard to Hunstanton (cell 3a) is currently in draft form, out for public consultation (as of July 2009).

8.14 The Kelling-Lowestoft SMP contains policy scenarios which emphasise either socio-economic or environmental benefits, a 'naturally functioning coast' or robust defence of economically important areas. It considers objectives, policies and management over short (0-20 years), medium term (20-50) and long term (50-100) perspectives and is up-front about the need for flexibility to reconcile different legislative, political and social attitudes. In essence, for North Norfolk, the short term policies emphasise the protection of communities against flooding and erosion. The long-term plan allows for unabated erosion except at Sheringham and Cromer which will be protected. The implications of this are profound. For example on the Cromer to Happisburgh stretch it means the abandonment of sea defences and the probable loss of parts of the villages of Overstrand, Mundesley, Trimmingham, Bacton, Walcott and Happisburgh, and the possible loss of the Bacton Gas Terminal. The rationale for this is that continued attempts at defence would result in large concrete seawalls and few beaches, becoming prohibitively expensive and damaging to the environment and the related tourism industry.

8.15 A number of general points on managing coastal change are made in the SMP:

- spatial planning at local and regional scales should look beyond 20 years and plan development to avoid flood and erosion risk areas
- planning should take account of the expected losses in housing stock, commercial premises and infrastructure
- nature conservation goals may need to wait for the long term to allow loss to people and property to be the immediate priority
- local operating authorities need to develop plans for removing cliff-top buildings, facilities and re-location of communities
- businesses will need to consider changes and how they will respond
- a 'hold the line' policy should prevail until mitigation (including compensation to private property owners) is put in place

- a more detailed economic and social analysis of the impacts should be carried out.

8.16 A number of ‘high priority’ actions to be taken over the next 5-10 years (until the next SMP review) are recommended in the SMP action plan:

**Figure 8-1: High priority actions identified in the Kelling-Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan**

Action	Responsible body
Monitor cliff retreat	NNDC
Develop exit plan for removal of property etc	NNDC
Promote use of policy risk zones in LDF and spatial planning	LA and EA planning officers
Promote consideration of land use relocation	LA and EA planning officers
Explore and develop compensation measures	Central Govt, LAs, GO-East, East Anglia Coastal Group
Improve understanding of alternatives to ‘hold-the-line’ and ‘no active intervention’ policies	EACG, LAs, central Govt

8.17 These immediate actions are procedural and somewhat tentative, in contrast to the overall policy and the implications of this for coastal communities which are detailed and radical. This reflects the status of the document as advisory, not directive and begs the question of how other documents and decision-making bodies are picking up and responding to the challenges presented by the SMP policy.

8.18 The draft Hunstanton to Kelling SMP is less challenging as it plans to continue to keep defending all settlements, historic features, low lying dwellings and important infrastructure for the foreseeable future. Where a retreat from the ‘hold the line’ policy is envisaged it is for the managed re-alignment of undeveloped areas. Contentious issues such as the relocation of communities do not arise, therefore, although immediate and longer term plans for changes to habitats are advocated.

### **Norfolk Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA**

8.19 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Norfolk (*Norfolk Ambition 2003-2023*) sets out objectives whilst the LAA is a three year plan for making progress towards these. The main challenges identified in the county-level SCS are:

- achieving housing and jobs growth targets (79,000 houses and 55,000 jobs by 2021)
- improving basic skills, participation in learning and attainment
- improving access to services, transport and infrastructure
- improving the environment through housing, managing climate change and ecological networks
- improving community cohesion by reducing deprivation and reducing crime.

8.20 The three priorities for the next three years under the environment sustainability theme of the LAA are:

- mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change in the county
- maintain and enhance biodiversity in Norfolk
- reduce the amount of waste that needs to be land-filled.

8.21 The adaptation element of this is stated as follows and incorporates a national indicator for the period 2008-2011:

*ii) To improve Norfolk's resilience to the changing climate, including reduction of the socio-economic and environmental risks associated with flooding and coastal erosion (adaptation)*

*NI188 - Adapting to climate change: The LAA target is to reach Level 3 of the Government's performance framework by 2011. This means conducting a comprehensive risk assessment for Norfolk, identifying the vulnerabilities and opportunities for each sector, developing a detailed action plan and embedding that action in the strategies of all local authorities and key partners.*

8.22 There is no previous baseline of adaptation activity so it is a process based indicator to track the progress of Norfolk partners in planning and putting in place appropriate measures to adapt to climate change. The Norfolk Climate Change Task Force is tasked with agreeing a Delivery Plan and reviewing progress against the Plan at regular intervals.<sup>83</sup>

### **Norfolk Climate Change Strategy**

8.23 Given that the Norfolk Climate Change Task Force/Partnership is charged with this objective and indicator, it is helpful to place it in the context of the wider Norfolk Climate Change Strategy (and Partnership), launched in 2009. This is primarily a strategy for creating a low-carbon economy in Norfolk, but includes a section on adaptation to predicted changes and associated threats; the identified threats being:

- greater flood risk
- water scarcity
- coastal erosion
- change or reduction in biodiversity and rare habitats
- heatwaves and associated health risks
- increase in pests and animal diseases.

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<sup>83</sup> Norfolk Local Government Association's strategy - 'Tomorrow's Norfolk, Today's Challenge – A Climate Change Strategy for Norfolk

8.24 The coastal flooding and erosion risk is described as follows:

*Another significant and widespread risk faced by Norfolk is from sea level rise and the associated flooding and coastal erosion this may bring. Over much of the county this might only affect several hundred metres inland from the coast, but in other parts the effects could extend some considerable distance inland. Coastal erosion is not a new issue in Norfolk, but we need to take steps to ensure that important infrastructure and assets are not at undue risk.*

8.25 These intended steps include participation in the regional Coastal Initiative, led by Government Office, which the strategy sees as providing a vision for a sustainable future for the region's coast, and identifying the key assets that need to be protected and enhanced. More specifically, the steps to be taken by Norfolk local authorities and partners to meet the adaptation targets are:

- develop a detailed understanding of the likely impacts in Norfolk over different time periods, and the vulnerabilities and opportunities for all sectors, based on the latest science in climate change projections (UKCP09)
- agree an Adaptation Plan with partners to address all key vulnerabilities and opportunities (by 2011)
- embed adaptation measures in strategies, plans, investment and decision-making processes across all council service areas (by 2011).

8.26 The strategy concludes by suggesting three critical success factors in achieving the aims of the strategy – leadership, partnership and communications and community engagement. The strategy is recognised as relatively local authority focused, reflecting its community leadership role and the expectations that Government has set for local authorities on climate change issues. The strategy is intended to be the launching point for developing a wider partnership approach to dealing with climate change and therefore the successful engagement with other bodies is seen as a crucial next step.

### ***Overarching regional strategies and plans***

8.27 At a regional scale, arguably the most important strategy is the **East of England Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy)** which relates to the period 2001-2021 and was finalised in May 2008. Within the East of England Plan, Policy SS9 – which is set out in full below – is devoted to "The Coast". This emphasises – in roughly equal measure – the importance of the coast in terms of environmental protection and enhancement; the role of the coastal economy; and the importance of adaptation in the context of rising sea levels.

Figure 8-2 : East of England Plan: Policy SS9 – The Coast

The strategy for the coast is to adopt an integrated approach that recognises:

- its needs for environmental protection and enhancement
- the economic and social role of the region's ports, seaside towns and coastal areas important to tourism; and
- predicted sea level rise and the adaptation challenge this presents to coastal communities and decision makers.

Reflecting this approach, local planning authorities and other agencies should seek, through their plans and management strategies:

- the regeneration of coastal towns and communities, reinforcing their local economic and social roles and importance to the wider region; and
- the conservation of the coastal environment and coastal waters, including the natural character, historic environment and tranquillity of undeveloped areas, particularly in the areas of coastline and estuary designated as sites of European or international importance for wildlife.

Local Development Documents should:

- adopt policies which support the restructuring of coastal economies and the provision of jobs to satisfy local needs
- ensure, in the case of coastal resorts, that: the town centre continues to provide for local and visitor needs; improved linkages are created between the town centre and the main leisure area(s) to secure mutual strengthening of their vitality and viability; and retailing in main leisure area(s) is limited to that necessary to support the vitality and viability of the leisure function without having adverse impacts on the retail function of the town centre
- ensure that new development is compatible with shoreline management and other longer term flood management plans, so as to avoid constraining effective future flood management or increasing the need for new sea defences
- protect important coastal environmental assets, if practicable and sustainable without causing adverse impacts elsewhere. If it is not practicable to protect sites and habitats in situ, including sites of European or international importance for wildlife, shoreline management plans and development plans should include proposals for their long-term replacement and the recording of any lost historic assets
- investigate and pursue opportunities for the creation of new coastal habitats, such as salt marsh and mudflat, in areas identified for managed realignment. New development should not be permitted in such areas.

Source: East of England Plan

8.28 Other policies pick up on particular aspects of coastal management; **Policy ENV1: Green infrastructure** – makes specific mention of the Norfolk coast as an environmental asset of regional significance for the retention, provision and enhancement of green infrastructure. **Policy ENV2: Landscape Conservation** affords the highest level protection to the Norfolk coast designated area. **Policy E6: Tourism** recognises the value of the coast as an attraction.

8.29 The (Draft) **East of England Implementation Plan** – proposes several initiatives specifically relevant to coastal management:

- flood risk and climate change adaptation - an over-arching programme to recognise and respond strategically to the effects of climate change and sea level rise
- flood and coastal risk management - two programmes to manage effectively the risks and impacts arising from the inter-related issues surrounding flooding and coastal erosion over the short and medium-long term
- integrated coastal management - focusing principally on making the most of environmental assets as a lever for economic regeneration whilst also responding to the impacts of climate change.

8.30 The **Regional Economic Strategy** – *Inventing our Future* – was published by EEDA in September 2008 and alongside the East of England Plan, it provides the second key statement of regional priorities. Its focus is strongly on sustainable economic growth and within this

context, the North Norfolk coastal area is recognised in a number of ways: as an area of high and persistent unemployment, economic inactivity and average earnings; and as an economic asset and a big part of what makes the region an attractive place to live and work.

- 8.31 On governance, the RES identifies a regional coastal forum and action plan as the principal mechanism for responding to the particular economic and environmental challenges of coastal areas. It also indicates the wider governance arrangements for RES delivery and performance management into which these would slot: the East of England Implementation Plan; Local Area Agreements; Multi Area Agreements; Integrated Development Programmes or equivalents; and robust sustainable community strategies and local development frameworks.

***Overarching national strategies and plans***

- 8.32 Nationally, there is a raft of strategies and plans that apply to coastal areas in England – including North Norfolk. Indeed, a study completed in 2004 by WS Atkins identified no fewer than five separate central government departments with some kind of interest in coastal management; and to this, we can now add a sixth (the newly-formed Department for Energy and Climate Change). Based on the Atkins study, the table below provides a summary.

**Table 8-1**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Key relevant agencies</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Environment Agency	Sustainable development
	Natural England	Environment protection
	Marine Management Organisation (in future)	Wildlife conservation
		Coastal defence
		Flood defence
Fisheries and water quality		
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	Regional Development Agencies	Economic performance
Department for Energy and Climate Change		Offshore oil and gas
		Offshore renewable energy
Department for Transport		Ports, harbours and shipping
Department of Communities and Local Government	Homes and Communities Agency	Land-use planning
		Aggregate extraction
		Communities in coastal areas
Ministry of Defence		Defence

*Source: WS Atkins (2004), substantially updated by SQW Consulting*

- 8.33 Included within this multi-dimensional national framework are the 25 Planning Policy Statements (or the earlier Planning Policy Guidance notes) which set out both statutory provisions and advice to local planning authorities. PPG20 was published in 1992 – some 17

years ago – with a focus on coastal planning. It explains that *“for planning purposes, as a general rule the limit of the coastal zone in the seaward direction is mean low water mark”*.

- 8.34 Other strategies and plans – some sectoral and some spatial – have a remit which extends a good bit further in a seaward direction, some as far as the edge of the continental shelf. Moreover many of these are nested within a policy framework with strong European Union and/or wider international components. It is in this context that the new Marine Management Organisation is likely to be formed in the future, assuming that the Marine and Coastal Access Bill (which is currently making its way through parliament) is enacted.

## II: Key coastal issues for North Norfolk

- 8.35 The description of relevant strategies and plans given above provides an indication of the main issues for coastal management, puts these in a policy context and also starts to describe some of the associated governance arrangements.
- 8.36 Clearly, the context is complicated in that coastal issues are evolving, they are multi-disciplinary and they are being addressed at multiple levels: locally, regionally, nationally and indeed internationally. In this setting, the key issues, strategies and associated governance arrangements are rather difficult to grasp. To overcome this, it is necessary to focus in on specific issues in North Norfolk. As a first step, the issues and plans are considered through five particular perspectives or “lenses”. The table below summarises these.

**Table 8-2: The main issues for coastal decision makers: as seen through five 'lenses' for North Norfolk**

The 'Lenses'	The Issues
flood risk and coastal defences	Deciding whether to defend communities/land and how to implement this decision
housing and affordable housing	How to provide affordable housing in the context of limited supply, an attractive area and low local wages How to accommodate housing & infrastructure growth without developing on erosion/flood risk areas
transport infrastructure	How to improve transport links to and within the coast yet promote sustainable transport in a car-dependent area
environmental asset management	How to conserve designated areas in the context of greater flood and erosion risk and potential coastal re-alignment
economic regeneration	How to improve the supply and quality of jobs through economic development in areas blighted by erosion or flood risk

- 8.37 Amongst these issues, housing and transport are less useful for our specific purpose of examining coastal governance because they have less of a specifically coastal flavour than the others. Both are very important (of greatest importance in terms of local priorities expressed in the Sustainable Community Strategy for example) but they are issues that would appear in any rural area with high environmental quality and are therefore less capable of revealing coastal governance issues. The other three present clear and particularly coastal challenges and the paragraphs which follow explain the issues further, referring to relevant strategies and plans.

### **Deciding whether to defend communities and land, and how to implement this decision**

- 8.38 The permanent loss of homes and property to coastal erosion presents a particularly sharp instance of where decisions about coastal defences encounter very real and strongly felt consequences for individuals and communities. Moreover, in the case of North Norfolk, this is not some future possibility; it is occurring now in Happisburgh and will occur in other settlements in the medium and long term. Nor is it just a local issue because the way it is resolved has implications for other areas at other times, and so it involves the entire chain of coastal decision makers, from local people to central government. Because it is happening here and now, it also presents a particular challenge for a regional and national set of governance arrangements that are just being established. Residents being evacuated from homes close to an eroding cliff might, for example, wish that the plans in the Norfolk LAA to carry out a risk assessment and develop an adaptation plan were already in place.

#### *Coastal defences*

- 8.39 The Shoreline Management Plans<sup>84</sup> describes in considerable detail the technical processes of coastal erosion and flood risk and the consequences of this for the coastline over the short (0-20 years), medium term (20-50) and long term (50-100 years).
- 8.40 In essence the short term policies proposed in both SMPs emphasise the protection of communities against flooding and erosion. Draft SMP 3a plans to continue defending all settlements, historic features, low lying dwellings and important infrastructure for the foreseeable future. Where a retreat from the 'hold the line' policy is envisaged, it is for the managed re-alignment of undeveloped areas.
- 8.41 SMP 3b by contrast has to deal with the eroding cliff of this central-eastern coastal strip and so has a long-term plan that allows for unabated erosion, except at Sheringham and Cromer which will be protected. The implications of this are profound. For example on the Cromer to Happisburgh stretch it means the abandonment of sea defences and the likely loss of parts of the villages of Overstrand, Mundesley, Trimmingham, Bacton, Walcott and Happisburgh, and the possible loss of the Bacton Gas Terminal (policy at the Bacton Terminal site is in fact 'Hold the Line' for the next 50 years, then possibly managed re-alignment depending upon the situation at the time). The rationale for this is that continued attempts at defence would result in large concrete seawalls and few beaches, becoming prohibitively expensive and damaging to the environment and the related tourism industry.
- 8.42 The spatial planning policies of Norfolk District Council<sup>85</sup> recognise and respond to the issues and policies of the SMP. Protection of the environment, the challenge of climate change, coastal erosion and flood risk, are acknowledged as particular concerns in the core (planning) policy of North Norfolk. Specifically, it includes a policy of *minimising exposure of people and property to the risks of coastal erosion and flooding and planning for a sustainable shoreline in the long-term that balances the natural coastal processes with the environmental, social and economic needs of the area.*

<sup>84</sup> The central and eastern stretch of the North Norfolk coast from Kelling to Happisburgh, Eccles and beyond is covered by the Kelling to Lowestoft Ness SMP. A separate SMP for the coastline between Kelling Hard to Hunstanton (cell 3a) is in draft form, subject to consultation (in July 2009)

<sup>85</sup> As described in the Local Development Framework core strategy and development control policies.

- 8.43 Practically, this policy is implemented in detailed spatial development control guidance. For the most affected areas (stretching from Weybourne to Happisburgh), Policy EN11 defines a Coastal Erosion Constraint Area (CECA) (extending to the indicative/estimated area at risk of erosion up to 2105) within which new development, or the intensification of existing development or land uses, will not be permitted (save where it can be shown not to result in increased risk to life or significant risk to property) and where proposals likely to increase coastal erosion as a result of surface water run-off will not be permitted.
- 8.44 The twin policy, Policy EN12, acknowledges the long term risk to the future of several of the settlements along this stretch of the coast including the coastal villages of Overstrand, Mundesley, Bacton and Happisburgh, all of which lie close to the affected areas and are directly affected by the risk of property loss. In essence it aims to safeguard the future function of such settlements by facilitating the 'rolling back' of development in these settlements to 'safer' areas inland. The planning inspectorate<sup>86</sup> endorses these policies as a sound response to the erosion risks identified in the SMP.

*The place of coastal erosion and flooding amongst other local priorities*

- 8.45 The District Council's perspective on erosion and flooding should be seen in the context of other priorities, amongst which it generally takes a lower priority. The Sustainable Community Strategy and the wider County-level SCS and LAA recognise coastal erosion and flooding, but do not include either amongst the top priorities. These reflect more immediate community concerns about affordable housing, transport, jobs and access to health services as expressed in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Core strategy for the LDF.

*Moving from policies to actions*

- 8.46 The SMPs provide a policy but not a means of implementing that policy. The LDF policies and plans outlined above are an important part of how the policies can be given some practical expression but the role of the planning system is limited in that it can only take actions to prevent future developments that would add to the costs or difficulties of coastal management. It does not provide for the management of existing developments, communities, infrastructure or natural assets and yet in North Norfolk the 'line' has not been held in some places and the loss of houses, land and habitats is a current, not a future problem to be managed.
- 8.47 SMP 3b goes as far as recognising some 'high' priority' decisions to be taken over the next 5-10 years (until the next SMP review) but the recommendations in the SMP action plan involve monitoring and the development of more plans, rather than action (see Figure 8-1).

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<sup>86</sup> Planning Inspectorate (July 2008) Report on examination into the North Norfolk core strategy development plan document

- 8.48 SMP 3a is on more comfortable ground as the immediate threats along this stretch of coast are to habitats rather than homes, and so it presents some short-term (up to 2025) and medium-term (2026-2055) realignments:

Table 8-3: Short and medium term actions recommended in Shoreline Management Plan 3a

Short term actions
Wells east bank realignment
East of Morston
Medium term actions
Thornham sea bank (Holme marshes)
Brancaster grazing marsh
Deepdale and Norton marshes
Blakeney Freshes

- 8.49 The lack of practical, immediate actions in SMP 3b illustrates the limits of the scope of these documents and also the constraints on what is currently politically possible. Thus there is something of a stalemate in which the 'hold the line' policy is maintained (even when the line is not being held!) until alternatives are better understood and (crucially from the perspective of local actors) central government comes up with a mechanism for compensating people for the loss of property.
- 8.50 In the meantime, North Norfolk District Council is required to deal with actual cases where erosion threatens homes (in the village of Happisburgh where houses are currently being evacuated). It is also trying to plug the gap between policy and practical necessity by developing a Coastal Management Plan<sup>87</sup> that seeks to put its actions for places such as Happisburgh into an overarching strategy.

#### *The role of local residents*

- 8.51 Local action groups such as the Coastal Concern Action Group illustrate the controversy surrounding coastal issues and remind us that the evidence and the solutions in the SMP or the planning responses in the LDF are not universally accepted. The evidence on causes and rates of erosion, predictions of the implications for coastal communities and sea defences, and the best course of action, are all hotly contested.
- 8.52 The issue of whether to defend communities or not, and how to reach and manage such decisions, is one that arguably presents the greatest challenge to coastal governance arrangements. In the case of North Norfolk this is not a hypothetical, future possibility but is a very real and current issue.

<sup>87</sup> Coastal Management Plan, in draft; and intended as the policy for the council which will guide its practical actions as well as engagement with wider plans and policies

**How to conserve designated areas in the context of greater flood and erosion risk and potential coastal re-alignment**

- 8.53 The natural habitats of coastal areas such as North Norfolk are of great importance to the people of North Norfolk, as well as being of regional, national and international importance. Decisions about the management of habitats in the face of erosion or sea-flooding threats therefore pull in all levels of decision makers, but a different set from that captured by the defending coastal communities issue. It also puts the spotlight on the relative strengths of the legislative framework for protecting or compensating species and habitats, as opposed to that for people and communities. It engages economic and well as conservation interests, because as numerous strategies point out, the coastal landscape is an important regional as well as local asset.
- 8.54 The environmental and heritage quality of North Norfolk is central to its character and its economic future, attracting visitors but also new residents. North Norfolk therefore faces a particular challenge to protect its natural assets and balance this with the aim of economic development. Thus one of the 'core aims' the LDF core strategy is to *protect the built and natural environment and local distinctive identity of North Norfolk, and enable people's enjoyment of this resource*. The strategy and actions for achieving this lie in the development control presumption against development in the countryside and in the various environmental strategies and management plans for the designated areas. By and large, the view seems to be that this policy is sound, although the Sustainability Appraisal of the core strategy queries whether the policy of concentrating growth in primary settlements conflicts with the objective of minimising the loss of undeveloped land (because there is not enough brownfield in these larger settlements, mean some development of Greenfield sites would occur).
- 8.55 The need to protect the Norfolk coast from development presents highly important but not particularly unique challenges for decision makers. A more particular challenge is presented by the threat that coastal erosion and saltwater flooding poses to protected and valued landscapes and habitats. This spatial dimension to this challenge reaches behind the coastal strip. For example, coastal erosion and sea-water inundation threatens the freshwater habitats of the Norfolk Broads; and as habitat is lost on the coast, environmental legislation requires that an equivalent area is taken into protection inland.

**Box 8-1: Example of the loss of environmental assets to coastal erosion**

Brancaster West Marshes is a site currently under consideration for coastal realignment. The marshes comprise approximately 40ha of freshwater grazing meadows forming an SSSI and SPA under the European Union Birds Directive (Tyrrell & Dixon 2000). The site is flanked by earth flood embankments with its frontage protected by defences strengthening the natural dune frontage. The latter were constructed in 1981 to provide protection against storm surges but have degraded to such an extent that the Environment Agency have proposed a managed realignment scheme in which the frontage will be removed, with a new defence constructed 300m inland from the original location. The freshwater marshes to the north of the new defence will subsequently be allowed to revert to saltmarsh.

The scheme has attracted considerable attention because it impacts on a site protected under the Birds Directive. Furthermore, it could potentially interfere with the defences and frontage protecting the adjacent Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve at Titchwell. Additional complications arise from the privately owned defences belonging to the Royal West Norfolk Golf Club to the east, which plans to construct its own defence to protect its practice ground in response to the scheme.

Source: SQW document review

- 8.56 The objective of protecting designated landscapes and habitats may be at odds with measures to mitigate climate change and therefore the risks of sea-level rise, storms and associated

coastal erosion and flooding. This is seen starkly in the decisions confronting Norfolk coastal authorities about off-shore wind energy developments. The District's and County's own policies promote renewable energy projects, as does regional and national policy, yet in practice, proposals for schemes such as large off-shore windfarms present difficult dilemmas. The boxed example illustrates the issues and decision-making challenges involved.

**Box 8-2: Example of renewable energy and environmental protection dilemmas**

Energy company Centrica has submitted a planning application for a 500MW wind farm off the northern coast of Norfolk, as part of the government's cycle of offshore wind development. Docking Shoal offshore wind farm is set to be located off the coast of Wells-next-the-Sea, with as many as 166 wind turbines and a capacity of 500MW.

A lease was granted by the Crown Estate in 2004 for the development of a wind farm at Docking Shoal, which is one of three planned by Centrica in the Greater Wash. Offshore renewable energy generation projects are not covered by the land use planning system so the planning application will be determined by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). The nearby 250MW Lincs project was granted planning consent by DECC in October 2008. Local councils and conservation groups are only consultees, although local authorities would have a say in related onshore developments, e.g. possible upgrading of the harbour at Wells to accommodate maintenance vessels.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) objected to the nearby Sheringham Shoal proposal on the grounds that it could have serious landscape, nature conservation and economic impacts on Norfolk when combined with further offshore schemes at Docking Shoal and Race Bank. NCC's view on the Docking Shoal proposal was that it would have major environmental benefits, leading to the reduction of up to 1.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. These benefits are clearly consistent with:

- National Policy on renewable energy targets
- Policy ENG 1 in the East of England Plan (2008) encouraging renewables
- A Climate Change Strategy for Norfolk (2008).

However, offsetting these benefits was the view that this and other proposals off the North Norfolk coast would have a significant cumulative impact on a variety of national landscape designations (e.g. Heritage Coast and AONB). A detrimental impact on the landscape character of the North Norfolk coast could in turn detract from the County's tourism offer and have an adverse economic impact. (Policies ENV2 and ENV3 in the East of England Plan ask local authorities to offer the highest protection to the region's designated landscape). National Planning Guidance (PPS22) advises that only small-scale developments should be permitted within areas with nationally recognised designations, such as AONBs, SSIs, National Nature Reserves, subject to there being no significant environmental detriment to the area.

In responding to the last two offshore wind farms proposals (2006 and 2007), the County Council has taken a cautious view of the cumulative adverse impact on the North Norfolk coast. While this clearly remains an important issue there has subsequently been (since 2007) a strengthening of national policy on renewable energy and climate change as evidenced in the: Climate Change Act (2008); Planning Act (2008); and the Energy Act (2008). Moreover, the County Council has signed up to the Norfolk Climate Change Strategy (2008), which firmly recognises the need to cut carbon emissions by reducing energy consumption and promoting a shift to low-carbon technology. These are important material considerations when assessing the Docking Shoal proposal.

The Environmental Statement for the proposal indicated that there could be an increased tourism potential from the wind farms but NCC concluded that it was unclear whether there would be any long term local economic benefits. Overall, and given the wider strategic benefits outlined above together with the national, regional and local policy objectives for tackling climate change, NCC officers recommended to members not to raise any objection to this proposal.

*Source: SQW document review*

- 8.57 As these examples illustrate, there are some difficult decisions to be made which involve the loss or possible relocation of protected areas and trade-offs between competing environmental objectives and global/local drivers.

***How to improve the supply and quality of jobs through economic development in areas blighted by erosion or flood risk***

- 8.58 North Norfolk provides an opportunity to investigate the challenges for coastal decision makers posed by the possibility (already occurring) that significant areas will be economically and socially blighted by the threats of coastal erosion or flooding. For the local area this is a vital issue because economic development underpins the achievement of goals such as improving job prospects, raising local wages and addressing housing problems. These are

also concerns at regional level because, as the Regional Economic Strategy points out, North Norfolk is already lagging in terms of its economic performance.

- 8.59 As a largely rural area some distance from major urban centres, North Norfolk district has a relatively narrow economic base with employment in the agricultural, manufacturing, tourism and social care sectors. Unemployment rates are low, but there is a seasonal dimension to employment in the labour market and, in terms of choice and quality, job opportunities are limited. With a large retired resident population, and a tendency for young people to leave the district for job choice and cheaper housing, the aim is to achieve a more balanced economy and population.
- 8.60 The District-level LDF prioritises the creation of a *strong, high value economy to provide better job, career and training opportunities* and it includes a policy to provide at least 4,000 additional jobs between 2001 and 2021 in line with the indicative targets set out in the East of England Plan. Job growth is to be achieved via policies for tourism, retail and the rural economy as well as provision of employment land.
- 8.61 Although demand for employment land is not expected to be great, take up of that already allocated is slow and future jobs growth is not expected to be highly site-based. There does not appear to be much likelihood that employment land or other economic development decisions are likely to require new development of land at risk from erosion or flooding, and indeed the current planning policy advises against this.
- 8.62 The inspector notes ideas for a new harbour and larger-scale sea-side developments in order to capitalise on hotter summers resulting from climate change and therefore greater visitor numbers, but concludes that the Development Plan is flexible enough to accommodate this and in any case it is too speculative to be planned for specifically at this stage.
- 8.63 The SMP describes the possibility of significant coastal retreat and flooding in the long-term which will have an impact on land uses for agricultural, industrial, tourism and other economic activities. Whether this amounts to a loss of economic activity and jobs is an unknown however and is not dealt with explicitly in the strategies reviewed. As the 'hotter summers' point above illustrates, a changing climate and coastline could both create and disrupt economic growth. The SMP also predicts the demise of some important economic assets such as the Bacton gas terminal and it is this possibility that perhaps presents the starkest and most challenging decisions for governance arrangements to deal with.
- 8.64 The LDF has recognised the erosion and flood risks highlighted in the SMPs, for example through the creation of a Coastal Erosion Constraint Area. From an economic development perspective, this designation and awareness more generally of the threats has the effect of blighting substantial parts of the coastal area. This presents coastal decision makers with a dilemma. On the one hand it is helpful if business and property investment is prevented or discouraged, because this limits future risks and liabilities. On the other hand, this lack of investment makes it harder to achieve economic goals.
- 8.65 This is recognised by the District Council, for example, which is thinking about different types of economic strategies appropriate for areas at risk; for example favouring short-term and moveable assets or involving the public sector in underwriting risks (e.g. by buying and

leasing back property). At the national level, Defra's Consultation on Coastal Change Policy invites local authorities to join its Coastal Pathfinders initiative to explore different approaches to tackling the potential of neglect and blight. The national Coastal Communities Alliance is producing a regeneration handbook to support the work of its members (coastal local authorities and community groups). Outside of special coastal initiative, there is not much sign of this issue being recognised in 'mainstream' strategies and funding streams as yet, but one might expect bodies such as the RDAs to increasingly acknowledge and support the needs of coastal areas affected in this way.

- 8.66 There is therefore a distinctive economic development issue arising in areas blighted by the threat of coastal erosion and flooding. One implication is that it becomes important for coastal governance arrangements to be capable of linking in with mainstream economic development and regeneration policies and funding streams.

### III: Coastal Governance in North Norfolk

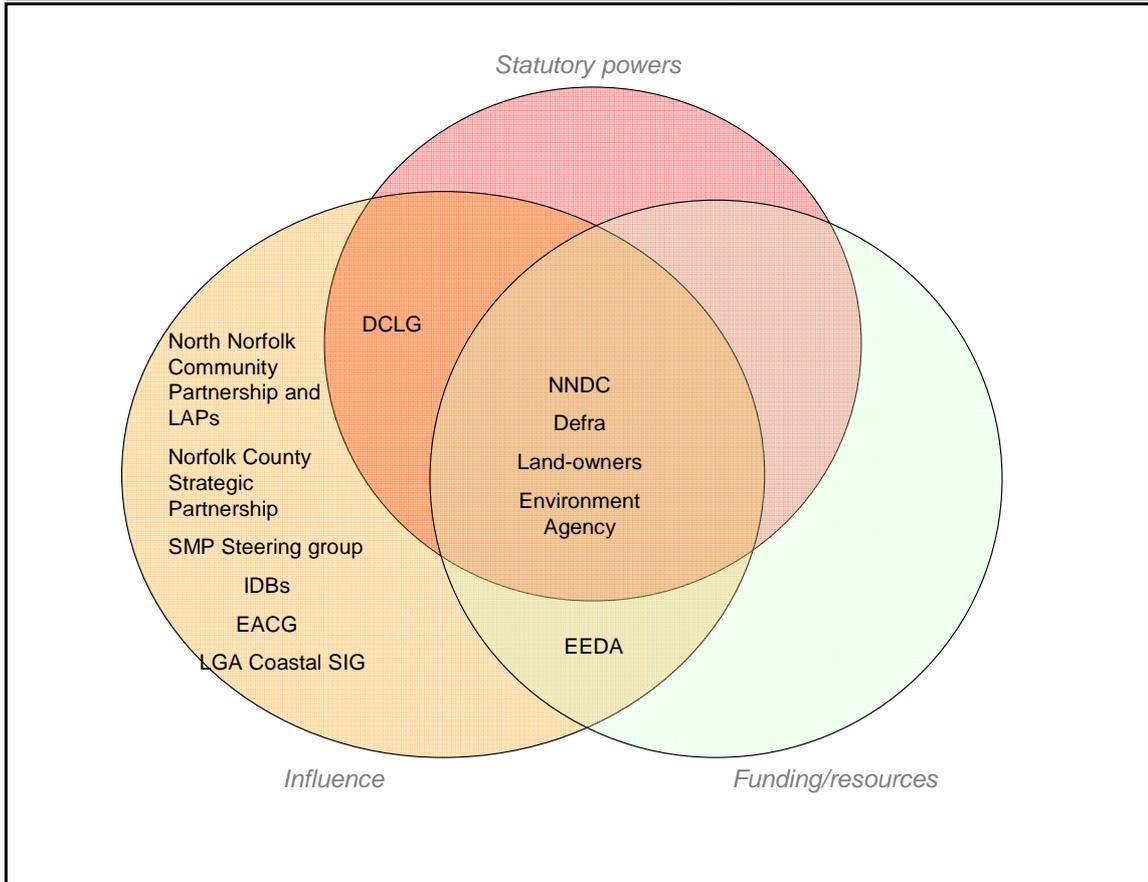
#### ***Mapping governance arrangements***

- 8.67 The organisations and partnerships associated with these three issues were identified from documents, consultation interviews and through a workshop which was held in North Norfolk in July 2009. The purpose of this institutional 'mapping' was to provide a foundation of knowledge on who the main decision makers are, and on what basis they operate from. A distinction was made between statutory powers, influence and funding/resources, by which we mean:

- **statutory or regulatory powers** – the ability of an organisation to stop things from happening (or sometimes to make them happen)
- **influence** – the ability to encourage others to do things, based on a variety of possible credentials such as scientific or technical knowledge, political influence, local awareness, etc.
- **funding/resources** – the ability to deploy funds or other resources (such as personnel) that enable actions to be taken.

- 8.68 For example, in relation to the 'defending coastal communities' issues there is a cluster of organisations that have statutory powers or duties, funding or other resources (e.g. staff) and a more general ability to influence decision-making by others. These are NNDC, Defra, land owners and the Environment Agency. There is then a cluster of organisations that have some influence over decisions but bring no statutory powers or resources to bear; the local community partnership, the local economic partnership, business representatives groups, the County Council and the County Strategic Partnership, Internal Drainage Boards, the SMP steering group, East Anglia Coastal Group (formerly the Anglian Coastal Authorities Group) and the LGA coastal special interest group. Then there are organisations like EEDA which may provide funding and influence, and the Department for Communities and Local Government which sets the strategy and policy framework for planning and local government, but which does not directly apply resources.

Figure 8-3: Decision-making bodies for the North Norfolk 'defending coastal communities' issue



Source: SQW Review and North Norfolk workshop

8.69 The institutions associated with each of the three North Norfolk 'crunch' issues were 'mapped', with a description of their roles, powers, influence and resources, based on background information from the document review, consultation interviews and workshop.

**The strengths and weaknesses of existing governance arrangements**

8.70 The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing governance arrangements is based on three sources; document review, consultation interviews and the local area workshop. At the latter, a specific exercise to identify examples of decision-making processes that 'worked' and examples that 'didn't work' was completed. By this we mean a process that allowed a decision to be reached and a successful outcome realised. In this section of the report we attempt to get behind the examples to consider the reasons why the process works or not, drawing on the workshops discussions and weaving in other sources as appropriate. The tables below present the main points for each of the three 'crunch' issues.

Table 8-4: Reasons why decision-making works or not for the 'defending coastal communities' issue

**Reasons why it works**

- community partnerships have been able to highlight coastal issues, where they have gained sufficient motivation and momentum, usually united by a common threat
- local lobby groups can say things that statutory agencies cannot and have fewer constraints. Therefore they serve to widen the debate and create more room for flexibility and innovation
- communities have worked well with the local authority, because there has been a willingness to make it work, awareness is high and the personalities work together (this is despite rather than because of the formal governance arrangements)
- the local authority has acted as an effective conduit to central government, based on a trust and a good reputation built up over several years
- persistent lobbying by community groups and the local authority for some form of social justice (compensation) element to coastal adaptation appears to be having some impact (but long way to go).

**Reasons why it does not work**

- community partnerships are disconnected from decision-making bodies, or may be in conflict with elected bodies. They lack influence because they are not sufficiently linked into real decision-making structures
- the balance of fluvial and coastal flooding is too heavily skewed towards the former, resulting in it dominating political/policy thinking and funding. River flooding dominates political attention and hence policy and funding
- time frames amongst different plans and different organisations are difficult to reconcile; e.g. SMP is up to 100 years; Councils' horizons - 4 years; LDF is 20 years; Comprehensive Spending Review is 3 years, Parliament is up to five years and Ministers have their own priorities
- central decision makers (e.g. civil service policy makers, HM-Treasury) are poorly connected to local needs or realities and haven't therefore been able (or willing) to accept challenges or changes to their policies
- a generic national policy is too inflexible to allow for the particular decisions that need to be made for the circumstances of a place like N. Norfolk, versus Thames Gateway for example
- SMPs are too limited in scope/concept to be a truly integrated coastal management document; they do not enshrine social justice concerns for example, yet nor are they clearly a narrow, technical or scientific document informing other policies. As they stand, their function is not clear and they do not deal with the consequences of their own policies

Source: SQW review and workshop

- 8.71 This highlights the importance of a groundswell of local opinion, forming around a commonly felt and understood issue, and then given some outlet in the form of links to local and national decision makers. The negatives are where this local feeling is not able to be translated into some form of progress, because of a disconnect between the interest or timescales of decision-making bodies, or because the framework set by policies, strategies and plans is too limited in scope or provides insufficient flexibility.

Table 8-5: Reasons why decision-making works or not for the 'defending habitats' issue

**Reasons why it works**

- investment in time for decision-making and in community engagement has made some realignment schemes successful
- political will to find a solution
- a willingness and ability to be pragmatic in interpreting legislation (e.g. EU Habitats Directive).

**Reasons why it does not work**

- there is a large gulf and a difference in interests between those affected and those making the decisions
- in the case of windfarms the problem was that the areas for development were identified before communities and local planning authorities were engaged, and before Strategic Environmental Assessments had been done
- the Habitats and Birds Directives are too inflexible to deal with natural changes. There is no effective mechanism for judging the relative benefits of existing versus new and different habitats arising from coastal erosion/flooding. Government targets for biodiversity also reinforce this inflexibility
- an effective means of preserving heritage features in the face of coastal erosion has not been found.

Source: SQW review and workshop

- 8.72 For the habitats issue, the importance of local engagement and of leadership to take matters forward is emphasised. Conversely, a lack of engagement or insufficient flexibility to respond to the results of this engagement are highlighted as sources of governance difficulties.
- 8.73 The economic development issue highlights again the theme of local motivation and common understanding; in this case of the need to secure livelihoods and to do so in a way that works with the grain of other (e.g. conservation) agendas. The negatives identified are where a wider policy or political support for these local efforts is not forthcoming or where the wider framework is too rigid to allow issues to be resolved locally.

Table 8-6: Reasons why decision-making works or not for the 'economic development in blighted areas' issue

**Reasons why it works**

- a common threat or issue unites opinion and creates sufficient motivation to prompt action; this common motivation is rooted in a shared understanding of local needs and an understanding of the challenges faced
- local initiative in the form of a willingness to come up with ideas, make decisions and put these into action
- decisions that meet multiple needs or priorities, and which are positive for various agendas, help create the necessary consensus and motivation.

**Reasons why it does not work**

- decisions and actions are too reliant on local initiative and are not supported by the statutory framework – hence decisions are slower and may get de-railed
- the consequences of policies developed through the SMPs for people's livelihoods and assets, and for the wider socio-economic wellbeing of areas, are not dealt with by the SMP or apparently any related process
- LSPs are not linked to parishes yet have substantial funding that should be better aligned behind local priorities and decision-making arrangements
- there is an imbalance between the powers and resources available to protect habitats and those (weaker) for people and livelihoods
- there is not the political will to deal effectively with rural transport problems
- rules and thinking are too rigid to allow for the flexibility required for coastal management.

*Source: SQW review and workshop*

**Common themes across the issues**

- 8.74 The paragraphs below identify some difficulties, tensions or gaps that appear in the governance arrangements as perceived by those involved in decision-making for the North Norfolk Coastal areas.

*Reasons why decision-making processes have worked*

- 8.75 Instances where decision-making processes have worked refer frequently to '**momentum**' and '**motivation**' and suggest that a critical mass of opinion is needed in order to prompt decisions and then action. There are triggers for this critical mass – such as there being a common threat, a common understanding of needs or issues (underpinned by a good understanding of coastal processes). It is more likely to occur when the issue is not divisive and when it creates opportunities across a range of interests or agendas, thereby enlisting a wider group of people.
- 8.76 **Community engagement** is a frequent ingredient of successful decision-making (cited especially at the local workshop but also through consultation with those with a wider perspective).

8.77 Norfolk is regarded as having a number of **successful partnerships**; the Norfolk Coast (AONB) Partnership, the Wash Estuary Strategy Group, the NNDC led Coastal Forum, for example. Although not a partnership as such, the relationship that coastal community groups and the NNDC have established over time also appears to be strong. Inter-authority partnerships have also grown including the Norfolk and Suffolk Coast Protection Partnership which is developing in order to provide strategic strength as well as operational effectiveness/efficiency.

*Reasons why decision-making processes have not worked*

8.78 **SMPs** and the process of developing them are commonly criticised. Concerns about a lack of consultation or community engagement are expressed although this is seen to have been improved for the second wave of plans. The greater concern is the way in which they are seen as 'willing the ends but not the means' – in that they set out a future for the coast and identify some implications of this, but they don't deal with the consequences or the practical matters of implementation. A further criticism is that they do not deal with a sufficiently wide scope of issues and do not therefore allow for fully integrated coastal management.

8.79 SMPs were meant to join-up governance across administrative boundaries but the Norfolk example (SMP 3b) shows a failure in this respect, in that the original version endorsed by all steering group members (including local authority officers) allegedly did not survive contact with elected members. Consequently NNDC and Great Yarmouth Borough Council adopted an amended version, Waveney District Council adopted the original, as did the EA for 'flood defence purposes'.

8.80 Overall, the experience with the two SMPs affecting North Norfolk is that they work as long as they do not create major challenges. e.g. when they involve coastal re-alignment in places with little effect on homes or communities (e.g. SMP 3a), then this goes relatively smoothly. When they involve a change from the status quo (from 'hold-the-line') in places where homes/communities are threatened, the process is not strong enough to allow the ensuing issues to be resolved.

8.81 An **imbalance of powers and protection for habitats/wildlife relative to those available for homes and other assets** is identified as a source of tension and difficulty in reconciling environmental and social interests. The perception is that a national (and international) framework exists to protect habitats or provide compensatory habitats, but there is not equivalent protection for people. It is not for this project to establish whether there is in fact a lesser protection for people, but what can be said is that there is a clear national/international framework for dealing with threatened habitats, with accompanying powers and resources, that does not exist for people. There is not even (as far as we can see) a clear national statement about how re-housing, compensation or other such matters arising from coastal erosion or flooding should be handled by local authorities, insurance companies, or some other arrangement.

8.82 The **level of priority afforded to coastal issues is low** at all levels of governance. This is seen as a problem even in a place such as North Norfolk where coastal issues are relatively prominent and local bodies have done more than most to prioritise the issues and take them onto a national stage. Even in North Norfolk, coastal erosion is not amongst the top priorities

in the Sustainable Community Strategy for example, and by the time it gets to a county level it has all but disappeared from strategic documents, other than those focussed specifically on the coast or climate change. At a national level, within Defra<sup>88</sup> and HM-Treasury for example, coastal governance is low down the list of priorities and even within Defra's flood and coastal erosion risk management programme, erosion is thought to play second fiddle to river flooding. This is said to be reflected in a 'two-tier' capacity at an operational level, for example the resources available for defences on the low lying flooding areas of the Norfolk coast are contrasted with the (smaller) funds available for cliff defences.

- 8.83 This difference in priorities is a factor in the perceived **lack of connection, or lack of understanding, between local people directly affected by coastal change and decision makers**, especially at national level. Examples given of this disjuncture include the refusal of civil servants to consider the issue of compensation for homes/property threatened by coastal erosion (in areas where there has been a change from the previous policy of 'hold-the-line', or a failure to achieve this policy); or refusal by NNDC of developments on the eroding cliffs being overturned on appeal by ODPM.
- 8.84 There is a **gap between understanding and action**. Despite the clarity of the policies stated in the SMP and the detail with which the implications for specific places and communities are described, the suggested actions are very tentative – emphasising monitoring of change and further research. Equally, the mainstream planning documents and processes have very little in the way of firm actions. The NNDC LDF has a policy of minimising new development in areas at risk of flooding or erosion and the LAA contains a new indicator for establishing a baseline and process for directing activity around managing coastal change, but neither deal with the immediate situation faced by communities such as Happisburgh.
- 8.85 There is a **lack of bridges between principles, policy and practice**. The SMPs, it seems, largely succeed in setting out principles and policy for coastal management. They set out a 'vision' for how the coast will be affected by natural processes (including those affected by man-made climate change) over the short, medium and long term, based on the best available scientific evidence. Nor are the policies within the SMPs widely challenged in our consultations. Instead criticism is targeted closely at their perceived failure in dealing with the consequences of the principles and policies they establish. This raises two governance questions in particular:
- Is there a failing in the steering group and its component organisations that allow principles and policies to become established without the delivery of these being worked out?
  - Is there is a procedural 'missing link' between the principles and policies that SMPs (arguably) manage to achieve and the agreement of practical planning and actions that can deliver this? The comments from our consultations and workshops suggest that there is, as do the recent efforts to forge a closer link between SMPs and LDFs, or the creation of coastal management plans by local authorities in coastal areas such as NNDC.

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<sup>88</sup> e.g. Coastal management does not appear explicitly in Defra's PSA, PSA indicators or Departmental Strategic Objectives. It is an aspect of one or more of these DSOs, e.g. 'An economy and society that are resilient to environmental risk'

- 8.86 **Leadership is from the fringes.** The main body responsible for leading on coastal management, the Environment Agency, neither has the statutory or financial powers to fully direct local action or the local and democratic legitimacy that would allow it to operate through established delivery mechanisms such as the local planning process. The 'leadership' role may therefore be detached from the heart of where local decisions are made and implemented. Conversely, North Norfolk District Council is widely regarded as playing a leadership role (locally, sub-regionally, regionally and nationally) but would probably regard itself as at the fringes in terms of its power to influence central government or in terms of its financial capabilities.
- 8.87 **Plans and Partnerships are at the early stages.** It is clear from the review of relevant strategies, plans and partnerships that the policy response to coastal management is still at the early stages of development. For example the Norfolk LAA includes an objective and indicator around climate change and the initial actions are about establishing partnerships, raising awareness and developing leadership. The concerns levelled at existing governance arrangements therefore need to be seen in the context of a system that is relatively new and evolving. They are not reflections on an established and stable system.



## Annex A: Approach to the development of scenarios

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### The use of scenarios for testing governance arrangements

- A.1 The central methodology for this project involves the use of scenarios to test governance arrangements in relation to 'crunchy' coastal issues in three case study areas.
- A.2 In Phase I of the work, we identified the 'crunchy' issues that arise in our case study areas and we mapped the decision-making processes and structures that are involved in managing these issues. To some extent, we can consider the strengths and weaknesses of these governance arrangements by considering how they are already engaging with these issues, but we also want to test their ability to cope with future changes, which is where scenarios come in.
- A.3 By scenarios, we mean short stories which reflect the consequences of policy being pulled in some particular directions in the future. We do not mean extreme weather, floods, projected coastal erosion or other external events. Nor are we carrying out the sophisticated modelling work that is often associated with these types of scenarios. *In this project, we are more interested in how governance arrangements will evolve and cope with some chronic coastal management issues under different policy scenarios.*
- A.4 The scenarios create a new set of challenges for the governance arrangements but they also imply changes to the arrangements themselves – i.e. governance is not static. Changes in priorities and the policy context will alter the balance of power, influence, funding and quite possibly the actual structure of governance arrangements. The key questions for consideration are therefore these: *how will governance processes evolve under these scenarios and does this make them more or less capable of addressing the key issues?*

### Policy drivers

- A.5 To inform the scenarios we reviewed a wide range of policy drivers and discussed these with the Coastal Initiative Steering Group and during our interviews with coastal experts. These included new legislation such as the Marine Bill, and new institutions such as the Infrastructure Planning Commission, for example.
- A.6 The discussion with the Steering Group moved on from identifying drivers to considering how these 'bite' on existing governance arrangements.

### Developing Themes and Axes

- A.7 Certain themes emerge from this discussion and the underlying review. These represent the different directions that are contained within policy shifts (explicitly or implicitly), and also the uncertainties or spectrum of possibilities that exist amongst these directions. Examples are given in the table below:

Top down	vs.	Bottom up
Big solutions to economic & environmental imperatives	vs.	Small incremental solutions to economic & environmental imperatives
Technical and separate areas of policy	vs.	Integrated and joined up policy
Elite professional evidence based decision-making	vs.	Accessible democratic decision-making
Long term	vs.	Short term
Outcome impact focused decision-making	vs.	Process focused decision-making
Ecosystem centric	vs.	Community well being centric
Short – Medium term economic imperatives	vs.	Medium to long term economic imperatives
Reduced number of integrated strategies	vs.	Proliferation of single-issue strategies
Regulation and defined parameters	vs.	Directive policy solutions

A.8 By combining themes that are associated with each other and which work plausibly together, a smaller number of potential directions emerge. Drawing on these themes, we identified two key axes around which plausible scenarios could be distilled. The two axes reflect the broad contrasts between:

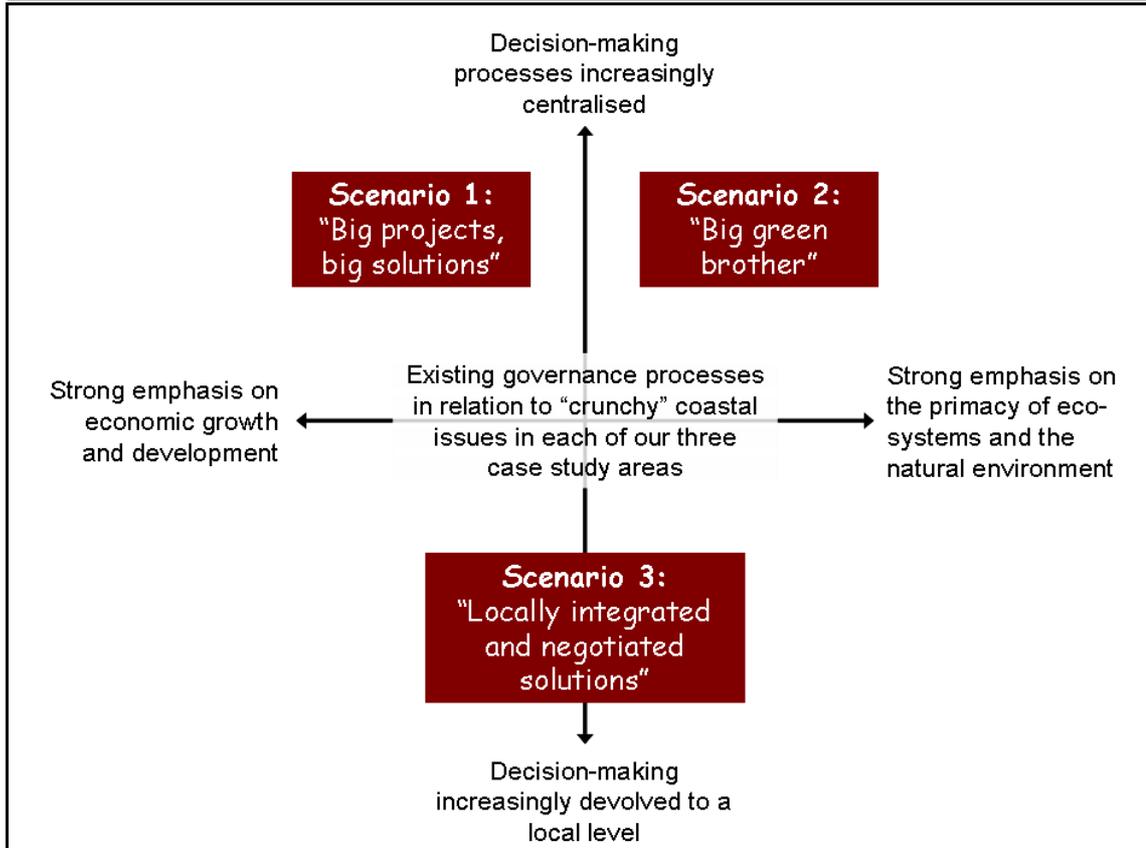
- the tendency for decision-making to be increasingly devolved and for solutions to be negotiated locally; and increasingly centralised, usually impact-focused, decision-making *processes*
- the contrast in perspective between the imperatives of the natural environment and the ecosystems within it; and the pressures for physical regeneration, development and economic growth.

### From themes and axes, to scenarios

A.9 From the two axes, we identified three scenarios<sup>89</sup> as illustrated in Figure A-1.

<sup>89</sup> Note that in exercises of this type, it is usually the case that four scenarios are identified rather than three – one in each quadrant. In working this through, however, the project team was of the view that broad distinctions between economic/development and environmental foci start to become implausible in the context of very devolved decision-making in which integration and locally devised solutions are the defining feature. For example, during Phase 1 of the study, we were told of local landowners developing local solutions in relation to issues around flood defence. But in terms of the axes, is this an example of an economic argument (i.e. they are protecting their livelihoods) or is it an environment-led solution? We think it is both, and that they are inseparable. In terms of the scenarios, the solution – we think – is effectively to merge the third and fourth scenarios with the scenario – literally – sitting on the vertical axis

Figure A-1: The basis for scenarios to test coastal governance arrangements



Source: SQW Consulting

- A.10 These three scenarios provide storylines which are on one level simple (and hence practical to use as a starting point for discussions) and yet at the same time are capable of accommodating the complexity of themes and policy drivers indicated above. They also (arguably) reflect the central dilemmas in policymaking.
- A.11 The simplicity creates false dichotomies to some extent – e.g. development versus environment – but there is scope within the discussions and analysis to consider the interactions between the different directions. For example, a development-led scenario may consider compensatory measures to conserve the environment and an environment-led scenario might consider how jobs and productivity can be achieved from a green economy. The locally driven scenario may consider the role of regional and local government, albeit from a standpoint from which local decisions have primacy. The difference, however, is in the principal driver for the three scenarios and the consequences that this has for priorities, decision-making processes and the roles of the various actors involved.

## Three Scenarios

### **Scenario 1: "Big projects – big solutions"**

- A.12 A set of large scale nationally-driven projects and developments (such as housing targets driven by national housing shortages, and plans for nuclear power stations driven by the national energy strategy, etc.), result from the primacy of economic and development-focused outcomes in decision-making processes. This is a world where strategic planning decisions

are made at national (or sometimes regional) level by new bodies like the Infrastructure Planning Commission. However associated with these developments is the acknowledgement of the requirement to mitigate adverse environmental impacts. This results in associated large scale mitigation activity such as carbon capture and storage, offshore renewables, and investment in high speed rail and other national public transport infrastructure.

- A.13 Decision-making is likely to be relatively quick; indeed, one of the drivers for this scenario is the growing levels of frustration in terms of how long it takes to “make things happen”. Linked to this, support for big strategic solutions will be driven by the assessment of technical cost-benefit analyses over the long term.

### **Scenario 2: “Big green brother”**

- A.14 When priorities are set nationally with reference to the primacy of the environment, the result is likely to be radical environmental decisions on coastal retreat; the wholesale abandonment of development in flood zones; and radical solutions with regard to biodiversity and the quality of marine environments, etc.
- A.15 Under Scenario 2, the emphasis is likely to be on development or policy that will mitigate climate change or contribute to a change of behaviours rather than end-of-pipe or retrospective solutions. Bodies such as the Marine Management Organisation and agencies like the Environment Agency (which have a remit for protecting the environment and ensuring compliance with European Directives such as the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Directive, and UK legal commitments such as the Climate Change Bill) will be especially important. In this process there may be relatively little consultation and dialogue with local communities; instead, the imperative is to take steps to allow natural ecosystems to work fully and well.
- A.16 In order to support the transformation of the economy to one that mitigates and adapts itself to the effects of climate change, resources may be devoted to supporting carbon capture and storage, renewable generation and incentives to protect and enhance habitats. These are likely to be delivered via a larger number of relatively smaller schemes than those delivered under Scenario 1.

### **Scenario 3: “Locally integrated and negotiated solutions”**

- A.17 Under this scenario, there is an increasing recourse to sub-regional and local solutions, which tend to be more integrated because at the local level ‘joining-up’ is a practical necessity.
- A.18 There is an emphasis on creating local jobs for local people and for providing affordable housing within communities; the types of priorities represented in the current Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements covering coastal communities. But at the same time, coastal communities are only too aware of the issues such as coastal erosion and flooding and are therefore increasingly driven to engage with local environmental concerns but also with global causes, such as climate change. Compared to Scenario 2, however, the nature of engagement can be far more responsive.

- A.19 The devolution of decision-making to local level along with the primary responsibility for the environment will lead to a regulated framework within which local areas determine priorities. There will therefore be a strong desire to create integrated strategies that are particular to local areas. This is likely to lead to smaller scale development and potentially locally-generated and bespoke solutions.
- A.20 Decisions will be driven by local priorities, often competing local priorities and so long and careful negotiation will be the nature of the decision-making, driven in part by locally elected members and taken through local democratic processes. Regional and national bodies will have more of an advisory role and will increasingly face the challenge of presenting technical and national-strategic arguments to communities with a tendency towards non-technical and local outlooks.
- A.21 Some of the ingredients for this scenario are already evident in coastal management; local authorities already have a particularly broad interest in the social, economic and environmental aspects of coastal management and have an appetite for more power and resources to be devolved to a local level. The push to embed Shoreline Management Plans within Local Development Frameworks is another example, as are the development of Integrated Coastal Zone Management strategies and plans by local authorities.

## **Annex B: Steering Group members, workshop attendees and consultees**

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B.1 A large number of different people have contributed to this study as Steering Group members and/or workshop attendees and/or consultees. We are very grateful to all the people listed in the Table below for their contributions to the study. We would like to acknowledge and thank them for the inputs they have provided.

**Table B-1: People who contributed to the study**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Stephen Archer	Waveney District Council
Roger Arundale	Associated British Ports
Trazar Astley-Reid	Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
Charles Beardall	Environment Agency
George Bennett	EEDA
Natalie Bennett	Natural England
Mike Berry	Managing Coastal Change
Andrew Birchenough	Cefas
Andy Bullen	Sheringham Chamber of Trade and Commerce
Jonathan Burney	Natural England
Roy Chandler	Essex Waterways Ltd
Anthony Coe	Anglian (Eastern) Regional Flood Defence Committee
Tony Cussen	Maldon District Council
Gareth Dalglish	Natural England
Colin Edmond	Essex Waterways Ltd
Chris Edwards	Royal Yachting Association Eastern Region
Peter Frew	North Norfolk District Council
Peter Garrett	Maldon District Council
Peter Glaves	Hallam Environmental Consultants Ltd
Nigel Harmer	Maldon District Council
Bernard Harris	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Steve Hayman	Environment Agency
Kevin Hilson	Waveney District Council
Jerry Hindle	Suffolk County Council
Mark Johnson	Environment Agency

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
John Jones	Norfolk County Council
Malcolm Kerby	Coastal Concern Action Group (CCAG)
Hilary Nelson	North Norfolk District Council
Miriam Lewis	Maldon District Council
Beverley McClean	Colchester Borough Council
Maria Medlycott	Essex County Council
Alex Midlen	CoastNet
Keith Moore	Environment Agency
Bill Parker	Suffolk ICZM Initiative
Paul Patterson	Waveney District Council
Paul Powell	Poppyland Area Partnership
Desi Read	Waveney District Council
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