

COASTAL GROUPS IN ENGLAND

Technical Partnership at the Coast

GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

March 2017



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document provides a core suite of generic Terms of Reference for the seven strategic Coastal Groups in England. Two of these Coastal Groups cross the border with Wales, which has a Coastal Group system with similar roles. In the two cross-border Groups, these generic Terms of Reference should be agreed with Welsh Government, which retains the Strategic Overview for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCRM). Where different arrangements may be needed for Welsh local authority Coastal Group members, this is highlighted.
- 1.2 Additional secondary items of reference can be added should individual Coastal Groups wish, to be inclusive of specific local issues. It updates the report 'Coastal Groups in England' (Environment Agency, 2008) to reflect findings of the review of Coastal Groups in England undertaken within the Environment Agency 'Coastal Strategic Overview Refresh' programme 2015-2017.
- 1.3 This programme involved engagement with the Coastal Group members and Chairs. The review of the Coastal Group performance between 2008 and 2017 (Appendix 1) was led by the Chairman of the Coastal Group Network and Environment Agency Senior Coastal Adviser. The contents of this document are also informed by consultation with the Environment Agency FCRM Committee, Directors Leadership Team, Environment Agency-Defra Stakeholder Forum and Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) Chairs group.
- 1.4 The review of the Coastal Groups in Appendix 1 draws on the Ministerial intentions to streamline and improve the previous network of thirteen Coastal Groups in England, and the intended activities of the seven new English/cross-border Groups set out in 'Coastal Groups in England' 2008. The review concludes that Coastal Groups have been and remain crucial to effective planning and management of flood and erosion risk at the coast, and provide important 'added value' through the partnership opportunities they provide. However, it also notes a number of changes to the FCRM landscape since their formation in 2008 to which the Groups must adapt to achieve their potential.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF COASTAL GROUPS

- 2.1 The aims and objectives of each Coastal Group are as follows:

Aims:

- To ensure coastal FCRM planning, investment and technical decision-making is informed by the best available information and advice to RFCCs and other interested parties;
- To influence the development and delivery of coastal FCRM strategic plans, policy and work programmes to ensure coastal FCRM is sustainable;
- To be a natural chosen forum for coastal FCRM practitioners to discuss problems and share experience;
- To be cost-effective in operation and provide best value for the public purse through the positive influence on the work of practitioners within and beyond the Group.

Principal Objectives:

- To actively contribute coastal expertise to the development and maintenance of the FCRM investment programme, through close working with and reporting to RFCCs;
- To maintain, monitor and, where needed, review, the suite of English and cross-border Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) using agreed leads within each Group and the process in Appendix 5;
- To identify, develop and share best practice among and beyond members with regard to procurement, delivery and general management of coastal erosion and flooding;
- Through discussion with Defra, RFCC Chairs and the Environment Agency, to ensure the views of members are considered in the development and implementation of national policies and initiatives relating to management of flood and erosion risks at the coast.
- To advise on and share research and development needs, project delivery and outputs in relation to coastal management, monitoring and engagement;
- To facilitate and support the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes by promoting use of its outputs, helping to demonstrate its value to practitioners, and encouraging good data management;
- To ensure key Coastal Group products and information, including all documentation relating to SMPs, is made easily accessible to the public and professionals on or via Coastal Group websites;
- To share expertise and resources between members to facilitate cost-effective coastal management when mutually acceptable and advantageous;
- To provide an attractive forum for coastal officers in Risk Management Authorities within the Coastal Group area which reaches out to local authority councillors, Local Planning Authorities, and other relevant organisations beyond the Group membership.

2.2 Coastal Groups should work closely as a network and with adjacent Coastal Groups, especially where SMPs cross Coastal Group boundaries. They should also work with relevant organisations and Risk Management Authorities beyond English borders where adjacent to Scotland and Wales, and extend an open invitation to them to engage with relevant Coastal Group activities.

3.0 COASTAL GROUP BOUNDARIES

- 3.1 The concept of littoral cells and the importance of longshore sediment transport have long been recognised by coastal managers as a basis for coastal management. Littoral cell boundaries usually occur where the orientation of the coast changes abruptly, and where sediment processes operate relatively discretely.
- 3.2 These cells can be defined at various levels of resolution, but analysis of consultations relating to the formation of the current seven strategic Coastal Groups in 2007 showed a clear preference for the coastal process boundaries identified in 'Mapping of Littoral Cells as Proposed by HR Wallingford' (Report SR328, Motyka & Brampton, 1993) as a basis for boundary definition. These boundaries are shown in Appendix 2a. They are still considered the most rational strategic interpretation of littoral cells, but can be updated as new information emerges.
- 3.3 Such an approach is also consistent with that used for existing SMP boundaries. However, administrative boundaries are also considered in the definition of Coastal Group boundaries, meaning some SMPs straddle Coastal Group boundaries.
- 3.4 The schedule below describes the Coastal Group boundaries, how the original Coastal Groups (pre-2008) fit within these boundaries. In some cases, the pre-2008 Groups are still maintained as sub-groups of the Coastal Group with specific functions, and these are highlighted in bold where this is the case.
- 3.5 The boundary of the South West Coastal Group and Severn Estuary Coastal Group has changed since 2008 from Hartland Point to Anchor Head near Weston Super Mare.
- 3.6 The boundaries of the North East Coastal Group and North West & North Wales Coastal Group have changed since 2008 from St. Abbs Head and the Solway Firth respectively to the English-Scottish border in both cases.
- 3.7 The boundaries of RFCCs and Coastal Groups are shown in Appendix 2b.

Coastal Group	Boundaries	Pre-2008 Coastal Groups included, in bold where still active as a sub-group
North East	Scottish Border to Gibraltar Point	Northumbrian Coastal Group; North East Coastal Authorities Group; Humber Estuary Coastal Authorities Group
East Anglia	Gibraltar Point to Thames Barrier	Anglian Coastal Authorities Group
South East	Thames Barrier to Selsey Bill	South East Coastal Group; South Downs Coastal Group
Southern	Selsey Bill to Portland Bill	SCOPAC
South West	Portland Bill to Anchor Head	South Devon and Dorset Coastal Group; Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Coastal Group; North Devon and Somerset Coastal Group
Severn Estuary	Anchor Head to Lavernock Point	Severn Estuary Coastal Group
North West	Great Orme to the Scottish Border	Liverpool Bay Coastal Group; North Western Coastal Group

4.0 COASTAL GROUP GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Full membership of Coastal Groups is comprised of technical officers from:
- a) Environment Agency: one representative per operational Area covered by the Coastal Group;
 - b) Maritime District and Unitary local authorities: one representative per authority covered by the Coastal Group;
 - c) Natural England and, where relevant, Natural Resources Wales: one representative each;
 - d) Port Authorities: one representative per authority covered by the Coastal Group;
 - e) Other FCRM Risk Management Authorities with a responsibility for managing coastal defences: one representative each.
- 4.2 Representatives should be at an appropriate level and should be able to make decisions on behalf of the organisation they represent.
- 4.3 In practice, some members may wish to use a single representative at Coastal Group meetings that represents the interests of two or more members - for example, where adjacent local authorities have formed formal resource-sharing partnerships. However, in each case full membership in principle remains for all parties.
- 4.4 A standing invitation to Coastal Group meetings is extended to Chairs and nominated Coastal Leads of the RFCCs covered by the Coastal Group. Other standing invitations and/or associate membership can be extended to other interested parties with the agreement of the Coastal Group full members.
- 4.5 Each full member shall be entitled to one vote for election of Chair, Vice-Chair(s), Treasurer and on other matters arising put to a vote by the Coastal Group Chair.
- 4.6 The Group will elect officers at an Annual General Meeting to fill the posts of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer from any full member of the Coastal Group. These appointments shall be for a period of three years unless specified otherwise during succession planning, with a maximum of ten consecutive years of occupancy.
- 4.7 Each Group shall have a secretariat to convene meetings, circulate papers, co-ordinate correspondence discussions, maintain online discussion forums, deal with correspondence on behalf of the Group and take/distribute meeting notes.
- 4.8 The Chair shall lead the meetings of the Group and represent the Group, as required, at external meetings and on committees and panels agreed by the Coastal Group full members. This will principally include attending RFCC meetings as required. The Chair may delegate some or all of these tasks to a representative.

- 4.9 The Vice Chair will support the Chair and deputise wherever necessary or appropriate.
- 4.10 Authority may be given by the Group for other members to represent the Group at other external meetings or on committees or panels.
- 4.11 The Treasurer shall maintain a record of the Coastal Group's accounts, which are to be audited and agreed annually. The Treasurer will arrange for the issue of invoices and receipts, making of payments and each year shall make a report on the accounts to the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.12 Where the Environment Agency provides accommodation and administration of meetings, the costs will be met in full by the Environment Agency. The accounts shall cover the costs associated with accommodation and administration of meetings when not provided by the Environment Agency. They shall also cover the costs of field trips or other activities undertaken at a Coastal Group level, and cover expenses of the Chair or Vice Chair when attending other meetings on behalf of the Coastal Group within the Coastal Group area.
- 4.13 The Coastal Group shall meet four times per year, including one Annual General Meeting. Secretariats should liaise with those of RFCCs to avoid clashes of date and to ensure meeting dates align in such a way that Coastal Groups are best able to provide input into the RFCC.
- 4.14 Sub-committees may be convened by the Group, for example to cover spatial sub-sections of the Coastal Group area, or to focus upon key elements of Coastal Group activity such as SMP maintenance, special projects or local planner liaison.
- 4.15 Local authority councillors may be invited to attend and observe the procedures and activities of Coastal Groups at meetings. Additional interaction with councillors and other stakeholders may also be encouraged through a separate forum (see section 6).
- 4.16 A list of core items for discussion in Coastal Group meetings is provided in Appendix 3.

5.0 COASTAL GROUP FINANCE AND RESOURCES

- 5.1 Where the secretariat, meeting venues and other administration costs of the Coastal Group are not provided by the Environment Agency, they should be covered through a membership fee or other form of contribution from full members. The size of this membership fee, if levied, shall be a matter for the individual Coastal Group. Funds levied for this fee may also be used towards sponsoring specified activities of the Coastal Group, such as contributions to research and development.
- 5.2 The sponsoring authority for full and associate members shall cover the costs associated with attending meetings.
- 5.3 Coastal Groups were originally established in the mid-1980s through informal voluntary arrangements, without central Government assistance. Sponsoring

authority contributions and/or membership subscriptions, amongst other mechanisms, have covered the relatively minor operating costs of the Groups. However, with the increasingly active involvement of the Coastal Groups in national policy and implementation initiatives there was a recognised need in 2008 for a contribution towards the involvement of Group Chairs and other officers in 'strategic' activity. This activity serves a broader benefit to sustainable coastal management beyond the boundaries of any individual Coastal Group, and is critical to the Environment Agency's coastal Strategic Overview.

- 5.4 These 'strategic' activities (as opposed to 'tactical' activities that serve the purposes of the individual Coastal Group only) are defined in Appendix 4a. Appendix 4b provides a template for submission of strategic expenses for approval by the Environment Agency FCRM Directorate before invoicing. The extent of strategic activity is limited by the funding available from the Environment Agency FCRM portfolio and is subject to annual change and withdrawal. Coastal Group Treasurers are therefore advised to retain a reserve budget for funding strategic activity should a need arise, and be prepared to discuss with other Coastal Groups the use of such budgets to support specified strategic activity of the Network Chair if required.

6. COASTAL GROUP RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.1 Democratic representation within RFCCs is provided by (county/unitary) Lead Local Flood Authorities, and does not include district councils which comprise most coastal local authorities. A standing invitation to Coastal Group meetings is therefore extended to Chairs and nominated Coastal Leads of the RFCCs covered by the Coastal Group. RFCCs extend a standing invitation in turn to Coastal Group Chairs who, together with the RFCC Coastal Lead and other representatives as appropriate, should ensure coastal considerations are properly considered in the development and delivery of the FCRM Investment Programme. This includes flagging any risks to delivery at the coast, and ensuring RFCCs fully understand the issues and priorities of district councils as FCRM Risk Management Authorities.
- 6.2 The Coastal Group should also aim to liaise with local authority councillors at a separate forum. This will ensure dialogue between the elected members with the broader understanding of local pressures, and technical officers who understand coastal processes and the key pressures they may put on existing and aspirational developments/natural assets at the coast. At a national level, this interaction should be maintained via the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group.
- 6.3 Other standing invitations and/or associate membership can be extended to other interested parties with the agreement of the Coastal Group full members. These could include, but are not limited to;
- 1) environmental and heritage organisations/landowners such as The National Trust, Historic England, RSPB and The Wildlife Trusts;
 - 2) infrastructure providers such as port/marina/harbour authorities (if not already a full member), Network Rail, utilities companies and Highways Agency;
 - 3) other landowner/business organisations such as the Country Land & Business Association, National Farmers Union and Local Economic Partnership;

APPENDIX 1: Review of Coastal Groups in England 2008-2018

To be finalised following discussion at Coastal Group Chairs/RFCC Coastal Leads governance discussion November 2017

Introduction

In 2016 and 2017 local authorities and the Environment Agency (EA) have identified various initiatives to 'refresh' – i.e. clarify and improve - the EA national strategic overview for the coast delegated to it by Defra in 2008. These include moving to strengthen coastal FCRM governance arrangements. This review of Coastal Groups in England informs the strand of the refresh that focusses on governance.

Key topics within the review

Looking back:

- How and why Coastal Groups developed;
- How Coastal Groups managed the transition towards the seven larger strategic Groups we have been working with since 2007;
- How Coastal Groups have been resourced in the past, and how this has changed;
- The main achievements of the Coastal Groups between 2008 and 2018, with case studies;
- What could have been better.

Coastal Groups today:

- How Coastal Groups fit within wider coastal governance;
- How Coastal Groups are resourced now, review of attendance and finance;
- How others perceive the Coastal Group network, where it is strong and where it might improve;
- Challenges faced, such as skills and capacity, profile, purpose and priorities.

Coastal Groups tomorrow:

Planning: Role regarding SMP governance, R&D and monitoring to support planning, environmental planning and engagement with local authority planners;

Investment and implementation: Influence of Coastal Groups on the investment programme, especially at RFCCs and during the annual programme refresh process, and role regarding addressing barriers to effective investment/driving efficiency;

Working together: How partnership working within Coastal Groups can evolve, including the growth of RMA partnerships, future opportunities and threats;

Responding to needs of communities: Public interaction – particularly Coastal Group websites and proposed hub site, and role/profile of Coastal Groups in communities at risk.

Profile and communications: Where do Coastal Groups need to be more visible and how can they better communicate within likely resource limits?

APPENDIX 2a – LITTORAL CELLS:

APPENDIX 2B – COASTAL GROUPS AND RFCC BOUNDARIES

**APPENDIX 2c – SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLANS: 1ST
GENERATION**

**APPENDIX 2d – SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLANS: 2ND
GENERATION**

APPENDIX 2e – REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAMMES

**APPENDIX 2f – RIVER BASIN DISTRICTS AND MANAGEMENT
CATCHMENTS**

APPENDIX 3: STANDARD ITEMS FOR COASTAL GROUP MEETINGS

With pressure on local authority resources, Coastal Group meetings will only be attended if there is a clear benefit to the members, the objectives of the meetings are clear, their content stimulating and practically useful, and they are given a chance to be involved.

These standard items are therefore only a suggested guideline for the key elements for inclusion. They are not exhaustive and most could in themselves form a particular focus for a 'themed' meeting seeking a particular steer from the Group on certain issues.

- **Objectives and focus** of the meeting, with reference to material circulated with the agenda, including minutes of the last meeting – agree these and address actions by exception.
- **Coastal Group business**, which may include the Chair's report, preferably circulated before the meeting, and Vice Chair and Treasurer reports also. Consider work and succession planning, Coastal Group website, RFCC liaison, Coastal Group liaison with other forums and local authority elected members, as well as any key activities or resource demands for work (such as consultations) coming up.
- **National updates**, which may be provided in person by a member of the national EA team or the Coastal Group network Chair. Otherwise reference any key issues within written updates circulated with the agenda from Defra or the EA.
- **Strategic Planning**, including any updates to SMPs or Coastal Strategies, key issues in action plans, development of new Strategies and communications and engagement work relating to them.
- **Investment planning**, led by EA Programme Manager or representative, with input from those on the RFCC officer sub-groups which work to refresh the programme each year. This could also include specific items on new ways of working to support programme delivery, and RFCC liaison more generally.
- **Research and monitoring**, including a national R&D update from the EA when provided, specific presentations on projects of interest and operational trials, as well as calls for research needs that could be fed back to the EA-Defra R&D programme or other local providers. This should also include an item on the **Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme** by that Programme's lead.
- **Hot topics**, perhaps a presentation from a member on a key issue of concern, but also an opportunity for each member to have space to highlight the issues they're facing and seek support or thoughts from the Group.

APPENDIX 4a: COASTAL GROUP STRATEGIC EXPENSES GUIDANCE

APPENDIX 4b: EXPENSES ITEMISATION TEMPLATE (see separate Excel Document)

In 2008 the Coastal Groups had been running for between 15 and 25 years, providing a source of local expertise that could be shared in a national or international context as well as a regional one. They succeeded largely on goodwill and local funding. In 2008 seven strategic Coastal Groups were formed in and with it the Coastal Group Network. National funding was made available to them in accordance with the terms of reference given to them by Defra in recognition of the contribution the Chairs (and, at times, Vice Chairs and other members) made to the strategic national and international coastal policy debate.

The Coastal Groups operate on three main levels:

Strategic: helping to effect the Environment Agency's Strategic Overview

Tactical: delivering Coastal Group business

Operational: assisting delivery of members business

The national funding is intended to cover only strategic level work. Coastal Group funds raised from membership fees should cover tactical work. For example the Coastal Group Chair attends the Regional Flood & Coastal Committee together with appropriate sub committees primarily for tactical influence to inform the investment programme within the Coastal Group area.

Details

The day rate for Local Authority Chairs will be their base salary plus immediate salary on-costs: national insurance, superannuation etc. This is similar to grant memorandum for capital. The rate does not cover office accommodation / support on-costs, which should be funded via the sponsoring authorities of Coastal Group members. Chairs working outside a local authority will have their day rate agreed with the Environment Agency separately. Travel and subsistence expenses can also be claimed where incurred against strategic activity.

Claims should be made half-yearly by invoice from the Chair's local authority to the Environment Agency for hours and expenses, with details of activities undertaken set out in the template that accompanies this guidance.

There is no set limit to any one Coastal Group, but it is expected that the Chair of the Coastal Group Network may be justified in having a greater allowance which they can then share around the other groups as they delegate and deputise activities.

Strategic expenses claims guidance

The table below is intended as a guide to the activities considered strategic for these purposes, and likely number of days per year each Coastal Group Chair should expect remuneration to cover.

Nr	Coastal Group Chair activity	Approx days / year / Chair	Comments
1	Attend Defra / EA Stakeholder Forum	2	Accommodation not included unless part of Coastal Group Chairs meeting.
2	Attend EA Coastal Practitioners Event	3	Accommodation included.
3	Attend Coastal Group Chair – EA national team meetings	3 +2 RFCC Coastal Lead	Usually three face-to-face plus occasional teleconferences. Includes travel, subsistence and accommodation. RFCC Coastal Leads subsistence and accommodation provided for two meetings per year.
4	Attend specific national meetings involving the EA e.g. project boards /steering groups on which Coastal Group Chair is an invited participant in Coastal Group capacity	By agreement with each CG Chair	To include preparation where necessary. Please provide forward plan of these to EA in April/October.
5	Produce Annual SMP Report	2	To inform RFCCs and Environment Agency s18 reporting. With assistance from EA Area teams.
Not included as a strategic activity for remuneration purposes			
6	Local secretarial work to support the Group or the Chairs		Secretarial support is offered locally for CGs, not from a national budget.
7	Attend local RFCC or other Coastal Group Meetings		To be funded by Coastal Group/sponsoring authorities.
8	Attend non-EA workshops: Defra / LGA / ICE etc		Chairs can attend but this is generally to be funded by the Coastal Group or local authority. However, some may be funded as strategic activity by arrangement.

	Network Chairman or delegated representative activity	Approx days/yr	Comments
9	Flood and Coastal (Telford) National Conference	4-5	Potential role on conference advisory panel.
10	KRING	2-3	By arrangement only – subject to funding availability
11	North Sea Coastal Managers Conferences	2-3	By arrangement only – subject to funding availability
12	RFCC Chairman's Meetings	4	To include preparation & feedback as necessary.
13	Defra Liaison Meetings	1-2	Partly by telecom
14	<i>CIWEM Rivers and Coastal Group/ICE Maritime Panel/Ciria</i>	4	To include preparation & feedback as necessary.
15	<i>LGA coastal Special Interest Group and associated Officers Group</i>	8	To include preparation & feedback as necessary.
16	<i>Technical Advisors Group</i>	2	Cut back amount of visits to allow inland flooding element to develop
17	<i>EA Technical Appraisers Group</i>	4	To include preparation & feedback as necessary.
18	Coastal Research Steering Group	2	To include preparation & feedback as necessary.
19	National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes Project Board	5-6	To include preparation & feedback as necessary.
20	At least 1 meeting of each coastal group per year.	6	Complemented by EA Head Office Service Level

APPENDIX 5a: SMP MONITORING, REPORTING AND CHANGE PROCESS

APPENDIX 5b: SMP ACTION MONITOR (See separate Excel document)

APPENDIX 5c: SMP CHANGE MONITOR (See separate Excel document)

Note these instructions are also contained in Environment Agency Operational Instruction D12_34.

This document applies to England only, specifically:

- Coastal Group Chairs
- EA Area Partnership and Strategic Overview Technical Specialists and Team Leaders;
- EA Area Coastal Engineers, and other Area teams responsible for delivering the policies and actions in the SMPs;
- EA Area Managers; Area FCRM Managers; Area Coastal Managers
- EA Regional FCRM Programme Managers; Regional FCRM Executive Managers; Regional Asset Investment and Planning teams

1. Approach to SMP development and use

1.1 Coastal Groups and RFCCs use SMP action plans to inform investment planning, meaning investment priorities are at risk from misalignment from the strategic direction if SMPs are allowed to become obsolete over time. In order to adapt to changing circumstances the SMPs must be kept valid by updating them as necessary.

1.2 Changes to these plans must be managed in a transparent and consistent way that includes appropriate governance and consultation procedures that reflect those used in SMP development. SMPs should therefore be seen as an ongoing process of 'shoreline management planning' rather than as static markers in time.

1.3 To enable this, the monitoring, reporting and change process in this document has been developed. The process is a generic framework which can be used across all SMPs regardless of whether original governance and approval mechanisms are still in place within Coastal Groups. It has been agreed following discussion with Defra, Coastal Group Chairs, and a number of coastal managers, practitioners and local authority elected members involved in SMP development and implementation.

1.4 Application of this process is a principal objective of Coastal Groups, and will mean:

- Coastal Groups are able to demonstrate and rely upon a cohesive and dynamic system of strategic planning that drives sustainable investment;
- Coastal Groups are better able to audit progress on, and barriers to, SMP action plan delivery, and report this to RFCCs and the Environment Agency;
- The Environment Agency is able to retain an informed coastal Strategic Overview and understand key risks and priorities around the country;
- The Environment Agency is able to report on SMP implementation to Ministers in the annual report on progress against the national FCRM Strategy as required under s18 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

2. What Coastal Groups need to do

2.1 Coastal Groups need to:

- maintain relevant information about SMP action implementation progress;
- report annually to the Environment Agency Head Office on SMP action implementation using Appendix 5b, Action Monitor;
- use transparent change management procedures that enable SMPs to be revised and updated;
- report annually to Environment Agency Head Office on changes to each SMP, using a spreadsheet Appendix 5c, Change Monitor;

2.2 This SMP implementation and change monitoring system has been used from April 2012, with the first annual submission reporting progress in April 2013, and annual updates following this due by the end of the third week of April. A full timetable for the SMP implementation, monitoring and reporting cycle is provided at the end of this document.

3. Governance: Action Plan Monitoring and Reporting

3.1 **Overall responsibility:** As part of the Strategic Overview, the Environment Agency Area FCRM Manager or Coastal Manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring an appropriate system is in place to enable SMP implementation to be monitored and reported in accordance with the requirements set out in this document. This responsibility extends to ensuring that the content of reports corresponds to any updates to Environment Agency Area SMP GIS files.

3.2 **Administration:** Coastal Groups maintain different governance approaches to managing SMP implementation and may include remnant Client Steering Groups, SMP Lead Authorities or 'Coastal Action Groups'. Arrangements will vary across England, so these will hereafter be referred to as 'SMP sub-groups' in this document. It is for the Coastal Groups to decide how their governance structures link to the framework set out in this document.

3.3 Coastal Groups will decide how action plan prioritisation, monitoring and recording is undertaken and who will administer the system. This could be undertaken by an SMP sub-group or by Environment Agency Area Partnership and Strategic Overview (PSO) teams, supported by other staff as appropriate.

3.4 Coastal Groups should send completed action plan reports to the Environment Agency FCRM Directorate Senior Coastal Adviser using the template in Appendix 5b. Environment Agency PSO teams / Coastal Engineers and other staff should support this process, and reporting may be delegated to them by the Chair. In these cases, PSO teams should work together to establish an SMP reporting 'lead' for each SMP.

3.5 **Further support:** The national team hosting the Senior Coastal Adviser will provide support and guidance to Area teams when and where necessary to facilitate effective SMP monitoring. Coastal Group Chairs should champion the effective operation of this system.

4. Updating and changing SMP information

4.1 Changes to SMPs may be necessary because of:

- significant new **research** or evidence on parameters that informed the decisions taken whilst developing the SMP;
- significant changes in **Government policy** – such as on spatial planning and adaptation – since the SMP was approved;
- significant new evidence arising from further investigation into local options, such as from a **Strategy Plan / scheme feasibility study**;
- a severe **event** has made an element of the existing SMP policy or action plan untenable;
- textual **correction or clarification** of meaning required since SMP approval;
- **organisational change** amongst those involved in SMP development that may affect SMP implementation;
- a need to update or amend programmes of work following **work progressed**.

4.2 When recording changes in the Change Monitor in Appendix 1b, please use one of the descriptors in bold above, or choose 'other', so reasons for changes can be reported nationally in a consistent way.

4.3 Any individual or organisation may propose a change stemming from one of the reasons outlined above, and this can be put forward for consideration within the Coastal Group if it has the support of the Environment Agency, a local authority within the SMP area, Natural England and/or Historic England.

4.4 The change process is set out at the end of this document. It is not an opportunity to re-visit decisions that were consulted upon in developing the SMP, if unprompted by the new circumstances listed above. It is a mechanism for keeping SMPs 'living' documents, for ensuring they continue to be based upon the best available evidence, and to improve future outcomes.

5. Governance: Change Management and Reporting

5.1 **Overall responsibility:** As part of the Strategic Overview, the Environment Agency Area FCRM Manager or Coastal Manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring an appropriate system is in place to enable SMP change to be managed and monitored in accordance with the requirements set out in Appendices 1b and 3.

5.2 **Administration:** Coastal Groups will agree how change management is administered within their individual governance structures (such as using an SMP sub-group), in accordance with the framework outlined in Appendix 3. Regardless of governance structures, for change management purposes they should include

- relevant local authorities within the SMP boundary (this may in some cases mean all local authorities within the SMP);
- the relevant Environment Agency PSO teams (supported as necessary by Coastal Engineers and other staff);
- Historic England and Natural England, and
- the remnant SMP Lead Authority if relevant and different from the above.

- 5.3 The 'Change Managers' listed above may wish to nominate a lead authority for the change process, who would maintain lists of stakeholder contacts, co-ordinate communications between Change Managers and to stakeholders, commission work, keep the applicant informed of progress, maintain an audit trail and handle change approvals & publication.
- 5.4 Each of the organisations involved should nominate an agreed point of contact and make the necessary preparations for approvals within their organisation in good time.
- 5.5 **Approval:** The change process set out in this document is deliberately non-prescriptive about routes of officer and elected member approval within or between local authorities, as these are likely to vary.
- 5.6 All 'moderate' and 'major' changes potentially impacting upon a nationally or internationally designated nature conservation site must be approved by Natural England, and potential impacts upon historical features such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments must be agreed with Historic England.
- 5.7 All 'major' and 'moderate' changes should be approved by the relevant Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), or a delegated sub-group of it. The Environment Agency will only approve these changes after they have been approved by the RFCC. This is because RFCCs agree the programme of funding for FCRM works and are responsible for 'reviewing and endorsing' SMPs. They therefore have an important role in scrutinising the credibility of an SMP, and any changes to it. 'Major' and 'Moderate' changes generally involve new work proposals or changes to the scope of existing work proposals that are likely to have funding implications and wider impacts.
- 5.8 All 'major' changes should be approved by the Environment Agency Area Manager. The Area Manager may wish to approve 'moderate' changes on a discretionary basis. Otherwise, the Environment Agency Area Manager is responsible for ensuring 'moderate' and 'minor' changes are approved at an appropriate level within the organisation: this does not mean the Area Managers (Deputy Directors) needs to approve all of these changes themselves.
- 5.9 **Consultation:** A range of stakeholders at the coast may need to be informed of proposals to change an SMP, and they may wish to be consulted during the process. These may include:
- County authorities in their capacity as Lead Local Flood Authority. They have a duty to co-operate with other authorities within and adjacent to their boundaries, and are responsible for supporting SMP implementation. This consultation may happen via the RFCC;
 - Other government departments/agencies and non-government organisations whose work or interests may be impacted. Infrastructure providers, utility companies, land managers and environmental organisations are likely to be interested in SMP change. This consultation may happen via the Coastal Group's associate members;
 - The public, including individuals, community or interest groups, and Parish Councils.
 - Local authorities bordering the relevant SMP boundary, who may be affected by change.
- 5.10 Change Managers should agree how and when they are consulted.
- 5.11 **Further support:** The Environment Agency FCRM Directorate Senior Coastal Adviser will provide support and guidance to Area teams when and where necessary

to facilitate effective SMP change management and monitoring. Coastal Group Chairs should champion the effective operation of this system, and are likely to draw upon the contents of SMP reports within their area for any reports to the Environment Agency and RFCCs. Coastal Groups should also make the SMP reports themselves available to RFCCs, and ensure they are engaged with, or at least aware of, the SMP monitoring and reporting cycles.

6. Funding changes to SMPs

6.1 Management of major changes may be eligible for funding through FCRM Grant in Aid. Some moderate changes may also be eligible on a case by case basis, as decided by the Large Projects Review Group. There is the potential that RFCCs may also be able to contribute to the management of Major Changes.

7. Flood Risk Management Plan Reporting

7.1 Under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, the Environment Agency must also report on the implementation of Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). Many of these plans contain information from SMPs. However, currently the reporting process for SMPs, which was developed earlier than that for FRMPs, is kept separate and SMP actions in FRMPs should be reported using the process detailed in this document.

Coastal Group receives change proposal. Change Managers discuss and agree change category (minor, moderate or major)

Minor changes:

Textual and mapping corrections with no effect on context or outcomes of the SMP;

Changes within organisations that may have a bearing on SMP implementation.

Change Managers organise changes.

Moderate changes:

Textual or mapping corrections where the context of the SMP is affected;

Changes, additions or deletions in the action plan that may impact on SMP implementation but do not change an SMP policy option. These might include changes to the timescale or priority of an action, a new study or scheme proposal, or alteration to the scope of a study/scheme already proposed.

Changes potentially impacting a nationally designated site, e.g. SSSI, NNR, AONB, SAM.

Change Manager group considers who will be interested in this change and informs relevant stakeholders. Consultation process invites stakeholders to comment on change – i.e. to support, reject or amend. Further work to investigate the change proposal is done if required**. RFCC and relevant local authority officers/members informed.

Unless otherwise agreed with Natural England, SEA and HRA are reviewed where international designation is potentially affected. Appropriate AA and IROPI procedures are followed as required by Natural England and WFD requirements are satisfied**.

** This process may have been carried out as part of the Strategy or scheme that instigated the change to the SMP.

Change Managers collate stakeholder feedback and the results of any supporting work, and agree change proposal. Environment Agency Area FCRM Manager / Coastal Manager will moderate disputes.

Change Managers submit agreed proposal to Coastal Group for agreement. Coastal Group agrees, rejects or agrees with amendments (these may require further work or consultation). Local authority officer/member approvals obtained as appropriate.

Coastal Group submits change proposal to RFCC for approval.

Environment Agency approves at the appropriate level. Change recorded on Change Monitor spreadsheet, GIS and NCERM. Change published on SMP website no longer than 1 month after agreement. Change implemented.

