

Local Authority “How to” Guide on Coastal Change Adaptation Planning: Project Brief Summary

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the completion of feedback on the national Coastal Change Pathfinder (CCP), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has proposed developing a local authority-led “how to” guide on planning approaches specific to coastal change adaptation. The aim is to collate lessons from the national CCP project in a format that could be useful for all local authorities affected by coastal change in the short- and long-term.
- 1.2 There are many examples nationally of best practice in coastal change adaptation planning. The “how to” guide will, for the first time, collate these approaches to form a menu of potential tools, thus helping to fill the gap which exists in terms of consistent and up-to-date information for varying circumstances. The guide will draw on the combined experiences of coastal authorities to establish a consistent approach to identifying Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs), thus forming the basis for any future adaptation planning nationally.
- 1.3 East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) is leading the development of the “how to” guide in partnership with Defra, relevant local authorities and other key stakeholder organisations, including the Environment Agency.

2. Project Aims

- 2.1 The Defra funding will be used to produce a “how to” guide on coastal change adaptation planning for use by local authorities with coastal change issues, including those with little or no previous experience in adaptation planning. The guide will propose a consistent approach for identifying and implementing CCMAs in order to guide national implementation. The “how to” guide will build on the lessons learned through the national CCP by referencing Defra’s CCP evaluation report published in January 2012.
- 2.2 The guide should be both useful and accessible. To ensure this aim is reached, the “how to” guide will be produced by local authorities, for local authorities, using case studies from a wide range of unitary, county and district local authorities.
- 2.3 Importantly, the guide will record the barriers and challenges faced by coastal authorities both during the CCP and moving forwards, as well as the successes of the CCP. It will also make reference to the current funding climate to highlight the need for an ongoing funding stream to enable the successful delivery of the adaptation approaches being identified. It is anticipated that the guide will become a template for future publications, for example a document to outline best practice in community engagement/communications to help establish a consistent approach.

3. Project Scope

- 3.1 The contents of the “how to” guide will focus upon specific planning approaches to coastal change required as a result of coastal erosion risk, rather than coastal flooding risk in the first instance. This is in line with the prominent coastal erosion focus of the national CCP, and in recognition of the guidance which already exists in relation to flood risk and the planning system.
- 3.2 The main focus of the project will be to develop a consistent mechanism for introducing CCMA in regions affected by coastal erosion on an ongoing basis. The CCMA element of the new guide will include/consider:
- Guidelines on temporary use of land within CCMA;
 - National variances such as geology and erosion rates;
 - Consistency with existing plans, strategies, and initiatives including Shoreline Management Plans and the National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping project; and
 - The potential and/or need for property developer guidance and contributions.
- 3.3 The project is intended to supplement local authorities’ existing planning policies as delivered through Local Plans (previously Local Development Frameworks), in order to provide specific, tested approaches.
- 3.4 The “how to” guide will be supported by case studies from across England. As communication and engagement are critical to the success of coastal change adaptation measures, community engagement approaches will be signposted throughout the guide and will be included in the menu of approaches. By featuring case studies, the guide will help authorities to match the most appropriate approach(es) to their specific locations and circumstances. The guide will include best practice examples taken from the national CCP scheme including:-
- Developing planning guidance linked to coastal change adaptation;
 - Working with the community to plan for adaptation (with a focus on planning, rather than generic engagement/awareness-raising);
 - Encouraging / incentivising rollback through planning policy – basic principles and key contacts (potentially to be followed by a second guide in the next two or so years, once CCP rollback schemes have been completed); and
 - Planning for rollback of properties and other assets.

4. Key Considerations

- 4.1 The support of coastal local authorities and other stakeholders is fundamental to the success of the project. It is vital that case studies and worked examples of adaptation planning are included in the guide so that coastal local authorities across the country have access to useful material and can implement best practice methodologies. Securing the input of various local authorities should also ensure that the guide’s contents are useful to all local authorities with coastal erosion issues, whether they have unitary, county or district status.

- 4.2 In line with the national CCP, the “how to” guide shall reflect national priorities including localism. It is acknowledged that its contents should provide a useful evidence base for future national planning policy development. This could include providing supporting guidance for National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Based on the current status of the NPPF, a mechanism for reviewing and updating the published “how to” guide must be considered.
- 4.3 The “how to” guide must complement, rather than duplicate, existing materials; the project team is therefore keen to link with any work being carried out by the Environment Agency and Coastal Groups on the subject of coastal change adaptation planning and the development of CCMA’s. This will ensure that a coordinated approach is taken at a national level and that best value is achieved.
- 4.4 It is anticipated that a significant proportion of the research will have been conducted by late 2012. The Defra funding has been ring-fenced for production of the “how to” guide during the 2012/13 financial year.

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