

Severn Estuary

Flood Risk Management Strategy

August 2009: Briefing Note

Our strategy team is working closely with those delivering the Severn Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). The technical work needed to assess how our existing flood defences will perform as flood risk increases with climate change, is consistent for both the SMP and the Strategy. Similarly the two teams are sharing information gathered on coastal processes and potential effects of climate change on inter-tidal habitats.

We held events earlier this year, inviting local people to discuss key issues of the SMP and Strategy with us. A Scoping Report, giving details of the key issues contained in the proposed strategy, was published to act as a starting point for discussion.

We did not receive many replies or disagreement with our summary of the key issues, but all responses are being used to develop both the SMP and the Strategy.



For example, we received helpful feedback concerning archaeology and heritage and we are now more aware of the potential impacts on the historic environment that

could occur if we make changes to flood defences or flood management.

Next steps

The draft SMP will be made available to the public this autumn. It will cover policies for flood and erosion management. From there the Strategy will determine whether the most appropriate approach is to

- 1) sustain the existing standard of protection
- 2) improve the existing standard of protection, or
- 3) accept an increase in flood risk

We will invest in flood risk management where it provides best value for the taxpayer. We will therefore target those areas where we can reduce risk to the highest number of houses. We must improve the quality of our most important wildlife sites at the same time, to help ensure the Government meets legal obligations for protecting the environment. These factors will influence the options we select for different areas.

We anticipate inviting groups with a wide technical knowledge of the estuary to workshops, to help us find out where our investment should be targeted and where we can make the most worthwhile improvements to wildlife habitats .

The likely timing of outputs are:

Consultation on draft SMP - October to December 2009

Strategy workshops on options - Early 2010

Consultation on draft Strategy - Spring 2010

Where to get further information

We are publishing our documents on

www.severnestuary.net

This site contains information for both the SMP and the Strategy.

To contact the team who are developing the Strategy please email

Severn_Estuary_FRM_Strategy@atkinsglobal.com

Severn Tidal Power Study

We are assisting the team studying proposals for harnessing tidal power in the Severn Estuary by providing information already in our possession, to minimise public expenditure.

However, we cannot assume any one particular tidal power solution will be pursued and so need to develop a Strategy that can be implemented independently of others. When completing our Strategy, we will identify any investment in new defences that should be held back because tidal power options could make it unnecessary.

A reminder

SMP: It is owned by the Severn Estuary Coastal Group. It provides the policy for coastal units from a choice of advance the line, hold the line, retreat or abandon the defence.

Strategy : It is owned by the Environment Agency. It provides the economic case for investment, defines defence alignments and the optimum standard of protection for each flood cell.