

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD AND COASTAL DEFENCE

12 January 2004

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is an update to the existing policy statement which was prepared by Arun District Council to provide a public statement of the Council's approach to flood and coastal defence in its area.

- 1.2 The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [Defra] has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence "operating authorities" i.e. the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards. Responsibilities differ according to the type of operating authority and Arun District Council's responsibilities are set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 below.
- 1.3 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence¹. To ensure a more certain delivery of the aim and objectives by the individual operating authorities the Government has published a series of high level targets². The first target requires each operating authority to publish a policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aim and objectives in their area. This will include their assessment of flooding and coastal erosion risk in their area, and the plans for reducing or managing that risk.
- 1.4 This policy statement fulfils that requirement. Copies are also available from the Council's Arun Civic Centre offices in Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 5LF and on the Internet at www.arun.gov.uk. The Council is also providing a copy to:

- the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
- the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; and
- the Environment Agency [also as the Internal Drainage Board]

2.0 HOW THE COUNCIL WILL DELIVER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Arun District Council acknowledges and supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence (as set out below). Our policy and approach will be consistent with them, as follows:

Government's policy aim:

To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically, environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.

Section 3 below sets out our plans for reducing or managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion risk in the Council's area.

Objective (a):

To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.

Provision of flood warning systems is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. However, Arun District Council recognises its related and important role in emergency planning and response. We will therefore:

- ensure that our emergency response plans include appropriate arrangements for flooding emergencies and that such plans are reviewed, in consultation with the Environment Agency, at least every two years;
- maintain an awareness of the Environment Agency's flood warning dissemination plan for our area and contribute to its implementation as necessary; and
- play an agreed role in any flood warning emergency exercises organised by the Environment Agency covering our area.

Objective (b):

To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

Arun District Council will:

- provide an adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound approach to providing the flood and coastal defence service. We will:
 - ◇ adopt a strategic approach to provision of flood and coastal defences, particularly by assessing any potentially wider effects of proposed defences. To this end we will continue to play a full role in Shoreline Management Plans [SMPs], Coastal Defence Strategies and Local Environment Agency Plans, for our area;
 - ◇ aim to provide sustainable flood and coastal defences which provide social and/or economic benefits to people whilst taking account of natural processes and which avoid committing future generations to inappropriate defence policies and options;
 - ◇ ensure work is carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money including (a) keeping up-to-date with policy and technical developments in flood and coastal defence, in particular by reference to Defra guidance, other Government publications and relevant

technical manuals; (b) consulting the Environment Agency on flood defence options to ensure that best practice is adopted and shared; and (c) using appropriately qualified and experienced experts to advise on analysis and design of works or programmes of management;

- ◇ consider alternative approaches to funding, such as Public Private Partnerships;
 - ◇ where appropriate seek contributions from developers or other direct beneficiaries of works, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 25;
 - ◇ ensure that appropriate maintenance regimes are in place for flood and coastal defences for which the Council takes responsibility;
 - ◇ inform landowners of what responsibilities for maintenance rest with them (see paragraph 3.1 below);
 - ◇ make publicly available the Council's expenditure plans for flood and coastal defence maintenance and capital works this will be reported through "Coast Protection Reviews" to the Council's Cabinet annually.
- play a positive role in fulfilling our statutory and other responsibilities for furthering nature conservation, including achievement of the Government's environmental obligations and targets. In particular we will:
 - ◇ fulfil our responsibilities in relation to nationally and internationally important conservation areas, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as a competent authority under the terms of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994. The Council has set out its Biodiversity Plan which was approved by the EP & C Committee on 27th October 1999. The Council has also made a commitment to meet the requirements of Defra High Level Targets in this respect.
 - ◇ co-operate with English Nature and the Environment Agency in completing and implementing Coastal Habitat Management Plans (CHaMPs) covering our area, drawing on English Nature/Environment Agency guidance for plan production;
 - ◇ when carrying out flood and coastal defence works, seek opportunities for environmental enhancement, and aim to avoid damage to environmental interest and to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans. We will monitor all losses and gains of such habitats as a result of these operations and report on them annually to the Environment Agency; and
 - ◇ ensure that, for those Water Level Management Plans where we are the lead operating authority, we work in partnership with English Nature to complete, implement and review Plans in accordance with Defra guidance on plan completion and the timetables set out in Defra High Level Targets.

Objective (c):

To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

As the local planning authority for our area, Arun District Council will take account of flooding and coastal erosion risks in all matters relating to development control, including development plans and individual planning applications, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Notes 20 and 25.

3.0 OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE RISK OF FLOODING AND COASTAL EROSION IN OUR AREA AND WHAT WE WILL DO TO REDUCE OR MANAGE THAT RISK

Flood and coastal defence responsibilities

- 3.1 Apart from certain obligations to protect internationally important habitats under the EU Habitats Directive, all flood and coastal defence works are undertaken under permissive powers. This means that operating authorities, such as Arun District Council, are not obliged to carry out flood and coastal defence works. It is also important to note that the Council does not normally accept responsibility for maintenance of flood defences on private land; this is the responsibility of the landowner.
- 3.2 Arun District Council is the relevant operating authority for:
- flood defences on ordinary watercourses which are not within the area of an internal drainage board; and
 - coast protection responsibility (ie measures against coastal erosion) for all frontages on the authority's 23.36km shoreline, with direct responsibility for 15.4km of that frontage. The Council has entered into agreement with a number of private frontages to undertake maintenance responsibility for coastal defences. Further details of the Council's responsibility can be obtained from the Council's Solicitor.
- 3.3 The flood and coastal defences that are owned or managed by the Council are detailed in the Council's database which is also provided to the Environment Agency.
- 3.4 The Environment Agency is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on designated main rivers. Culverts under roads are generally the responsibility of the relevant Highways Authority (West Sussex County Council or The Highways Agency).

Assessment of flood risk

- 3.5 There are a considerable number of ordinary watercourses for which the Arun District Council is the relevant operating Authority, these have not all

been identified. Records exist of many of the ordinary watercourses which have been inspected and the Council has undertaken works as necessary to mitigate flooding incidents. Those watercourses that are designated as main river are the responsibility of the Environment Agency and are shown more particularly on maps available for inspection at the Environment Agency Offices. There are three internal drainage boards operating in the Council's area; the Environment Agency acts as internal drainage board for these three areas, the boundaries of which are shown on the Environment Agency Planning Consultation Map.

- 3.6 We have agreed with the Environment Agency the location of a number of "critical ordinary watercourses" within the Council's area (these are watercourses which are not classified as "main river" but which the Council has agreed with the Environment Agency to be critical because they have the potential to put at risk from flooding large numbers of people and property). A map showing these "critical ordinary watercourses" is available for inspection at the Council's offices (address as para 1.4) during normal working hours
- 3.7 Based on historical flooding information, coupled with the Environment Agency's indicative flood plain maps, the Council has carried out an assessment of the risk of flooding from the ordinary watercourses in our area.

*The main areas at risk of flooding, are the areas of flooding concern which exist within the District boundaries but are not its direct responsibility, these are scheduled below. **The Council is satisfied that there are minimal risks to human life created by these flood risks from ordinary watercourses, but emphasises the need for the Environment Agency's flood warnings to be heeded, where these are provided (see below).***

- A29 Lidsey Farm junction, Sack Lane/Shripney Road
- Nyton Road, Junction A29 Westergate/Northfields Lane off Nyton Road
- Watercourses above Barnham Rife from Barnham Lane North East to Walberton
- Watercourses above Yapton Rife, Yapton Road
- Felpham Way, Felpham
- Ancton Lane, Ancton
- Horsemere Green Lane, Climping
- Water Lane, Angmering Village
- Craigweil Estate, Aldwick

Action to reduce or manage flood risks

- 3.8 The main means by which flood risks will be managed is through the Environment Agency's Local Flood Warning Plan (West Sussex) of December 2003. This makes arrangements for warnings to be provided in coastal and Main River areas within this Council's area, including individual warnings to high risk properties. The Environment Agency hold plans and

can advise on areas of risk. Arun District Council has included plans for responding to both major and minor flooding in its emergency planning procedures and has arrangements for cascading warnings received from the Environment Agency to relevant Council services.

- 3.9 The Council has a programme in place to inspect the state of:
- grills at the entrance/exit of culverts at five locations weekly between October and March each year
 - all critical ordinary watercourses and related culverts;
 - the Council does not inspect all ordinary watercourses annually.
- 3.10 The Council has an annual maintenance programme for the flood defences and channels which it owns, or for which it accepts responsibility, so that they operate at optimum efficiency. Where the responsibility for maintenance rests with a landowner, the Council will aim to secure co-operation in ensuring appropriate maintenance takes place, drawing on enforcement powers if necessary.
- 3.11 The Council does not currently have any major capital flood alleviation works planned.
- 3.12 By following Government guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 on development in flood risk areas, the Council, acting as a local planning authority, will ensure that risks are further minimised. This includes measures for ensuring sustainable urban drainage systems to control surface water run off.

Assessment of coastal erosion risks

- 3.13 As identified in the 1997 Shoreline Management Plan, of 23.36km shoreline 15km is defended against erosion and is the Council's direct responsibility, 2km consists of natural shingle bank (0.4km of this being the Council's direct responsibility and the remaining 1.6km being private).
- 3.14 Risks of erosion of the defended frontage is low although this depends upon the continued maintenance of the defences; without defences there would be a potential average erosion rate of 1-2 metres per year. Elsewhere on the undefended coast, potential erosion rates are close to zero or negative (see 1997 SMP for details).

Action to reduce or manage coastal erosion risks

- 3.15 The Council is an active partner in the Southeast Regional Monitoring Programme. Routine beach management for the protected frontage consists of annual reprofiling where necessary and occasional recharge, all as indicated in the Coastal Defence Strategies as adopted by the Council and agreed or pending agreement by Defra. Specific Beach Management Plans will be developed for frontages at Pagham/Aldwick, Felpham, Elmer and Climping over the next four years. Our management regime takes into

