

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD AND COASTAL DEFENCE (February 2003)

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by Worthing Borough Council to provide a public statement of the Council's approach to management of flood and coastal erosion risk in its area.

Background

1.2 The Department for 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.

1.3 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence. 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 targets. 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 an assessment of the risk of flooding and coastal erosion in their area, and what plans they have to reduce that risk.

1.4 This policy statement fulfils that requirement. Copies are also available from the Council's offices at Portland House, Richmond Road or The Town Hall, Chapel Road, Worthing. BN11 9PU and on The Council Web site www.worthing.gov.uk . The Council is also providing a copy to the following:

- Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)
- Environment Agency.

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

2.1 Worthing Borough Council supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence (as set out below). The Council's 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 plans for reducing or managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion 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, Worthing Borough Council recognises its related and important role in emergency planning and response. The Council will therefore:

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

Objective (b): To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

Worthing Borough Council will:

- Provide an adequate, economical, technically and environmentally sound approach to providing flood and coastal defence. We will:
 - adopt a strategic approach to the 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, and Local Environment Agency Plans, for our area;

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- 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 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 technical manuals; (b) consulting, where appropriate, with the Environment Agency to ensure that best practice is shared on flood defence options to ensure that best practise is adopted and shared; and (c) using appropriately qualified persons to advise on the analysis and design of works or programmes of management;
 - consider alternative approaches to funding and procurement, such as public/private partnerships etc.;
 - where appropriate seeking contributions from developers or other 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;
 - make publicly available the Council's expenditure plans for flood and coastal defence maintenance and capital works.
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- play a positive role in fulfilling our statutory and other responsibilities for nature conservation including achievement of the Government's environmental obligations and targets. We acknowledge our responsibilities under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as a competent authority under the terms of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 when carrying out flood and coastal defence works, we will:
 - aim to avoid damage to environmental interest;

- aim to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans and
- seek opportunities for environmental enhancement.

Objective (c): To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.

As the local planning authority for the borough of Worthing, Worthing Borough 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. HOW THE COUNCIL AIMS TO REDUCE AND MANAGE THE RISK OF FLOODING AND COASTAL EROSION

3.1 Worthing Borough Council's area is predominantly urban some of which is low lying. All flood and coast defence works are undertaken under permissive powers. This means as the "Operating Authority" Worthing Borough Council is not obliged to carry out flood and coastal defence works.

3.2 Worthing Borough Council is the relevant operating authority for:

- Flood defences on ordinary watercourses which are not within the area of an internal drainage board;
- Coast protection responsibility for the 7.5 km Borough's frontage; and
- Private land owner responsibility for 0.5 km of frontage outside the borough within the Arun District Council's area.

3.3 The flood and coastal defences that are owned or managed by the Council are detailed in the Council's Flood & Coastal database. In due course a copy of this database will be incorporated within the National Flood and Coastal Defence Database (NFCDD), which is currently being co-ordinated by the Environment Agency.

3.4 The Environment Agency is the relevant operating authority for flood defences on designated main rivers. Culverts under roads are usually the responsibility of the relevant Highway Authority (West Sussex County Council or The Highways Agency).

Assessment of flood risks

3.5 There is a considerable length of ordinary watercourse for which Worthing Borough Council is the relevant Operating Authority. At present the full extent of these has not yet been identified. Records exist of many of the ordinary watercourses that have been inspected and the Council has taken appropriate flood mitigation measures. Those watercourses that are designated as Main River (Ferring Rife) are the responsibility of the Environment Agency. There is no Internal Drainage Board operating in the Council's area.

3.6 The Council has agreed with the Environment Agency that the Teville stream, river ditch and certain watercourses in the vicinity of West Durrington are "critical ordinary watercourses" (i.e. watercourses which are not classified as "main river" but which the Council has agreed with the Agency to be critical because they have the potential to put at risk from flooding large numbers of people and property). The location of these is indicated on Fig 3.1 & Fig 3.2.



Fig 3.1 map showing critical ordinary water courses in West Durrington (outlined in red). (Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map, crown copyright licence no. LA086169)

3.7 Based upon local knowledge and historical data, coupled with the Environment Agencies indicative floodplain maps, the Council has carried out an assessment of the risk of flooding from both the critical ordinary and ordinary watercourses within the borough. The Council is satisfied that there are minimal risks to human life from these flood risks from these watercourses, but emphasises the need for the Environment Agency's flood warnings to be heeded where they are provided.



Fig 3.2 map showing critical water course teville stream river ditch (marked in red).
(Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map, crown copyright licence no. LA086169)

Action to reduce or manage flood risks

3.8 The Council is preparing a programme to determine and inspect the condition of all flood defences, ordinary watercourses and relevant culverts (whether owned by the Council or not).

3.9 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.

3.10 The Council will ensure that regular maintenance is carried out on all flood defences, watercourses, channels, ditches and culverts which it owns or for which it accepts responsibility, so that they operate at reasonable efficiency. Where the responsibility for maintenance rests with the landowner, the council will aim to secure

co-operation in ensuring appropriate maintenance takes place, drawing on enforcement powers if necessary.

Assessment of erosion risks

3.11 As identified in the 1997 Shoreline Management Plan, the 7.5 km of coastline in the Council's area consists of:

Coast Protection defences (Worthing Borough Council)	7.0 km
Coast Protection defences (Arun District Council)	0.5 km
Flood defences (maintained by the Environment Agency)	0 km

3.12 Risk of erosion of the whole, defended, frontage is low. There are no undefended lengths of coastline within the Council's ownership or responsibility.

Reduction and management of coastal erosion risks

3.13 In order to maintain the low risk of erosion the defences and supporting infrastructure the Council will ensure that regular maintenance is undertaken as necessary. The Council operates a programme of routine maintenance and management for the whole frontage consisting of repairs, annual reprofiling and occasional recharge. Our management regime` takes into account the most recent predictions for the Impact for climate change/relative sea level rise as set out in the Shoreline Management Plan and Arun to Adur Coastal Strategy.

3.14 The Council is in the process of introducing a monitoring scheme as recommended in the Shoreline Management Plan (1997) and the River Arun to Adur Coastal Defence Strategy (2000). Worthing Borough Council is acting as the Lead Authority, on behalf of the South Downs Coastal Group (SDCG), for the Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme for the South East, that is being undertaken in partnership with the South East Coastal Group (SECG) and SCOPAC (Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline). This is one of the first projects of its kind in the country and this Council will be responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data to all authorities in the SDCG area, in an effort to better understand and manage coastal erosion risks.

3.15 The South Downs Shoreline Management Plan 1st Review has been chosen as national pilot to help DEFRA develop new procedural guidance for the next generation of SMPs.

3.16 The first phase of work has recently started with Halcrow, consulting engineers, project managing a series of work packages that have been awarded to various experts in their field. These packages will take elements of the work needed to develop a SMP and test ways of ensuring that all future SMPs will be standardised around the UK's coastline. The results will form the basis of DEFRA's supplementary procedural guidance that is intended to augment rather than replace the 2001 Guide.

4. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 As this is intended to be a working document Worthing Borough Council this will review this policy statement in one years' time, when it will be revised and reissued as necessary.

4.2 The Council has set out its policy and approach to flood and coastal defence. It recognises the need to work in partnership with Central Government and other Operating Authorities. The stakeholders of Worthing also have an important part to play, in recognising the vital importance of watercourses in controlling flood risk and the need to avoid blockages, whether by dumping rubbish or obstructing flows in other ways. The Council seeks the support and co-operation of the public to advise it of any problems, which might increase the risk of flooding or coastal erosion.

References

Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales MAFF and Welsh Office, September 1993

High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Defence Operating Authorities and Elaboration of the Environment Agency's Flood Defence Supervisory Duty MAFF, November 1999

Shoreline Management Plan, June 1997

Rivers Arun to Adur Coastal Defence Strategy, March 2000

South Downs Coastal Group Website (www.sdcg.org.uk)