



REPORT

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan 2 – Mid Term Review

Isles of Scilly SMP2 Mid Term Review

Client: Council of the Isles of Scilly

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1 Scope

This document presents a mid-term review of the Isles of Scilly sections of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2).

The focus of the review is upon the SMP2 Preferred Plan, in terms of the planned policies and their associated actions (the Action Plan) for each section of coast where there is planned change in coastal management. This is either in terms of coastal management approach over the SMP2 epochs, and or where there is a change in preferred management from that proposed in SMP1.

The mid-term review is the opportunity to take stock of progress in delivering the Preferred Plan since SMP2 was published (2011). As such the review aims to build upon the thinking behind the Preferred Plan, rather than undertake a full re-assessment of this Plan. To this end Section 2 of this report provides information on how the Preferred Plan was developed and agreed through the SMP2 process.

The review provides the opportunity to reassess which are the most appropriate actions to focus on to achieve real progress in managing change on our coastline. Taking account of subsequent information and progress to date the mid-term review is able to reframe the Action Plan as a prioritised list of actions for each Management Area. Where further work has been undertaken or where further information is now available, this needs to be considered in moving forward from the relatively blunt definition of SMP policy, looking beyond the policies at the intent of the Preferred Plan to deliver an approach to long term sustainable management.

It is hoped that the outcomes of this Mid-term review will form a platform from which the Council of the Isles of Scilly can monitor progress and the delivery of actions on an ongoing basis.

2 SMP2 Context

A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal evolution and presents a policy framework to address these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner.

The SMP is a non-statutory policy document for coastal defence management planning. It takes account of other existing planning initiatives and legislative requirements, and is intended to inform wider strategic planning. It does not set policy for anything other than coastal defence management. However, from this perspective, it aims to provide the context to, and consequence of, management decisions in other sectors of coastal management.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2) was published in 2011 after a period of public consultation. The Plan was adopted by elected members of Cornwall Council, the Council of the Isles of Scilly and Torridge District Council and signed off by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The SMP2 document sets out the results of the first revision to the original SMPs (completed in 1999) for the area of coast extending from Rame Head to Hartland Point; covering the whole of the Cornish coastline and a small section of the Devon Coastline between Morewenstow and Hartland Point. The SMP2 also covers five of the Isles of Scilly islands.

The SMP2 was developed by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Coastal Advisory Group (CISCAG) on behalf of Cornwall Council (the lead authority), Torridge District Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly. It was supported throughout its development by a Client Steering Group (CSG) made up of a number of stakeholders including representatives from each local authority involved, the Environment Agency, National Trust, RSPB, Natural England, and Historic England.

2.1 Policy development/context

It is important that the SMP must be realistic given known legislation and constraints; not promising what cannot be delivered, particularly in terms of what might realistically be funded. However, the SMP, while developing a long term sustainable management plan, has to take account of the pragmatic issues in terms of impacts on communities, aiming to deliver from a broader perspective against the values of the coastal zone as a whole. There is be no value in a long-term plan which has policies driven by short-term politics, works that prove to be detrimental when considered several decades into the future or cannot be justified in terms of public expenditure.

The Plan must, therefore, remain relevant and flexible enough to adapt to changes in legislation, politics and social attitudes. The plan considers objectives, policy setting and management requirements for three main epochs; from the present day, medium-term and long-term, corresponding broadly to time periods of 0 to 20 years, 20 to 50 years and 50 to 100 years respectively. This concept of epochs is not intended to be prescriptive and the policies within the short and medium term work to deliver the longer term Intent of Management over the longer term. There is a need to have a long-term sustainable vision, which may change with time, but the SMP must demonstrate that defence decisions made today are not detrimental to achievement of that vision.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly SMP2 covers an area of significant environmental value, but also one which has a strong history of human settlement and present day use. These uses and interests are not inherently opposed. In reality it is the natural attraction, combined with the historical coastal use, which gives this area its distinct and considerable value to man in the present day. While individual core objectives or aims may, therefore, be set, and indeed are set, with respect to each specific aspect of the area, the aim of the SMP2 must be to develop a broader intent of management where, as far as possible, these specific objectives are not set in conflict. The underlying principle for the development of the plan has been to consider the specific circumstances of the differing sections of the coast and through this understanding, attempt to deliver the greatest benefit to the totality of coastal communities in an area.

2.2 Key Principles

The following list of principles reflects the aspirations of all interested parties. They have been used together with their objectives identified for each area of the coast, to aid policy development and identification of specific objectives. These objectives were developed by consulting the Client Steering Group (CSG), Elected Members Forum (EMF) and key stakeholders, and are presented as aggregated objectives for each area. It is important to note that these come from the values that stakeholders place on the issues and features in each area. Some of these objectives therefore conflict with others. Because of this, the SMP2 is not able to achieve all of these objectives. The principles are listed below and are set out in no particular order.

- To support the essential diverse character of the landscape & seascape of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- To allow natural evolution of the shoreline wherever possible
- To minimise impacts upon the historic environment, without unduly preventing natural coastal processes
- To support existing nature conservation values and minimise impacts upon habitats, while allowing adaptive response to natural change
- To support the viability and core values of coastal settlements, in a manner consistent with the Government's sustainable development principles
- To support diversification of tourism and recreational opportunities
- To support the adaptation and resilience of regional and county transport links
- To manage the risks to communities from flooding and support their adaptation and development of resilience
- To manage the risks to communities from erosion and support their adaptation
- To establish a long-term action plan which helps to minimise and reduce the reliance on defences in the future.

2.3 Development of Policy

2.3.1 Division of the coast

In order to develop policy in sufficient detail the SMP2 divided the coast into sections. This was not intended to define hard barriers to thinking about the coast as a whole but solely a practical means of examining the coast in detail.

At the widest scale, Policy Development Zones (PDZ) were defined. This was done to minimise the residual linkages between one section of the coast and the adjacent section, but also to ensure that in developing and discussing policy, all major interactions across all themes were able to be considered in a

coherent manner. The five inhabited islands of the Isles of Scilly archipelago are considered as one PDZ (PDZ 18).

At the smallest scale, in order to create policy for individual sections of coast, Policy Units were established, within the framework of the PDZ. This was to ensure that the broader implications of managing one policy unit with respect to another unit were considered. Inevitably there are dependencies between policy units, and so these are grouped together within a Management Area. It is within these management areas that the overall intent of management of the coast can best be described and for the Isles of Scilly, each island considered within the SMP2 forms a Management Area as follows:

MA42 – St Mary's
 MA43 - St Martin's
 MA44 – Tresco
 MA45 - Bryher
 MA46 - St Agnes and Gugh

This approach is illustrated in Figure 2.1

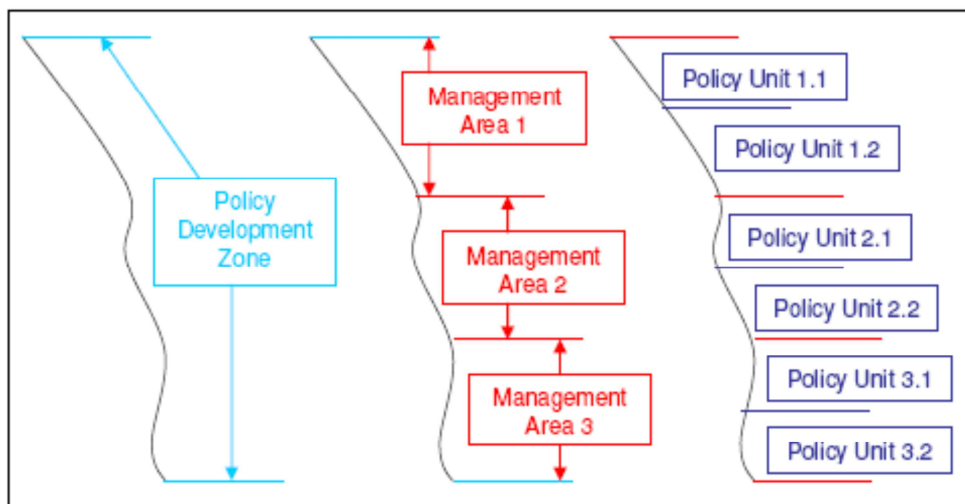


Figure 2.1 Schematic of SMP2 links between PDZ, MA and PU.

2.3.2 Policies

The generic shoreline management policy options considered in the SMP2 are defined by Defra. They are outlined in the following statements:

- **No active intervention (NAI):** a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences or natural coastline.
- **Hold the line (HTL):** maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by defences or natural coastline.

- **Managed realignment (MR):** manage the coastal processes to realign the 'natural' coastline configuration, either seaward or landward, in order to create a future sustainable shoreline position.
- **Advance the line (ATL):** build new defences seaward of the existing defence line where significant land reclamation is considered.

The following additional information helps to describe the generic policies in more detail:

No Active Intervention

The policy option of NAI has developed from two distinct set of circumstances. In the first, the SMP has identified the need for the coast to be allowed to develop naturally. Typically, it may be that erosion of a frontage is providing sediment to other sections of the coast and therefore, may be important that the coast is allowed to continue to erode if sustainable intervention is to be achieved elsewhere. Where this or some similar condition applies, this is discussed in the SMP. The other situation where the policy of NAI is defined may arise where it is unlikely that operating authorities would provide funding for defence. It may be that works have a cost/benefit ratio less than one, or there may not be priority funding. Where appropriate, the SMP introduces caveats to make this distinction. The SMP has identified that privately funded works may still be permissible, however, there may be conditions associated with this such that private works do not result in negative impacts on other interests.

Hold the Line

The intent of this policy option is to maintain defence to important assets or interests at the coast. This does not necessarily mean that the existing defences would be maintained in exactly the same form as they are at present. There may be a need to adjust the local alignment in the future or to replace, or add structures. In this way, constructing cross shore or shore linked structures, such as groynes or breakwaters, may be the approach adopted in the future under this policy in specific cases. The proposed policy therefore sets the intent to maintain defence of the important features in an appropriate manner.

Managed Realignment

This policy option may arise from a series of different circumstances and objectives. The ethos of MR is that management of the shoreline would be improved by either allowing for and/or creating the conditions for the coast to realign. A very obvious example of this is in moving a sea wall back from the active coastal zone, providing a more secure position for such a defence while the shoreline re-adjusts. Other examples are where intervention at the coast may be less onerous if the coast is allowed to retreat before intervention is undertaken. This may, for example, create the opportunity to retain a beach in front of a set back hard defence. In summary, MR is used to allow the shoreline to move backwards or forwards, with management to control or limit movement of the shoreline, so as to achieve a specific outcome.

Advance the line:

An ATL policy option may be adopted where advancement of the shoreline would assist in creating a more robust defensive position and provide additional opportunity for increased intertidal width and/or land reclaim. Advancement of the line may not necessarily require the construction of structures seaward of the existing shoreline. Examples include the construction of tidal barriers or outer harbour walls where this provides a more sustainable solution based on the objectives and core values of a given community or settlement. Alternatively, advancing the line can be used in order to introduce variation into the plan shape of a coastal frontage and encourage the accumulation of sediment and promote sustainable management of the intertidal width.

These descriptions indicate the level of detail required by the SMP. In developing these generic policies there is a basic requirement to state the intent of the policy, such that it is the intent, not the definitions given above, that drive future management.

It is recognised from the above descriptions that in some areas a combination of approaches may be possible either across several different policy units taken as a whole (i.e across management areas) or more locally in realigning sections of a unit while holding critical control points, particularly in relation to an overall policy of managed realignment. The definition of a policy within a policy unit has, therefore, to be considered within the broader context of how that policy interacts with other policies and how policies combine to deliver the intent of management.

In undertaking the mid-point review, particular attention has been given to developing from the SMP policies, considering how these broad scale generic policies need to be considered in terms of the practical interpretation and implementation with respect to individual sites. The review, therefore, aims to give a broader understanding of the issues, to a more local or specific audience, as to what actions are needed. The review has, also, to recognise that there still needs to be a degree of flexibility in delivering the overall intent of management set out in the SMP.

The review focusses on the areas where significant change is being proposed in terms of specific policy units but considers this within the broader intent of management within the Management Area within which each policy unit sits.

2.4 Action Plan

The Action Plan developed for the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan 2 provides the basis for taking forward the intent of management. The SMP guidance states that the purpose of the Action Plan is to summarise the actions that are required before the next review of the SMP. However, in reality the Action Plan has to be looking much further into the future, in order to provide guidance on how the overall management intent for 100 years may be taken forward.

The Action Plan attempts to capture all intended actions necessary, on a policy unit by policy unit basis, to deliver the intent of management at a local level. It can also help to prioritise Flood and Coastal Risk Management medium and long-term planning budget lines, identify potential partners and sources of funding.

The CSG approved the SMP2 Action Plan based on the Preferred Plan, and through signing up to the Action Plan, each CSG partner demonstrated a commitment of intent to undertake the actions, as priorities allow and funding permits.

Throughout the review, a key aspect that has come to the fore is that, while often actions in terms of monitoring, physical process or Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management studies have been undertaken; as a necessary priority, there are many areas where there is still the need to further promote the understanding set out in the SMP2. In particular, it is seen that more immediate action is required in developing ideas and understanding from within communities faced with longer term change.

3 Isles of Scilly SMP2 Mid-term review

3.1 Introduction

The Isles of Scilly SMP2 mid-term review has been a significant undertaking. A walkover of the the five inhabited islands was undertaken in order to inform the review of SMP2 intent and progress in managing coastal change,. In particular the mid-term review has considered:

- the critical interdependencies between specific policy units (i.e. considering these policies in terms of the broader intent of management within management areas defined by the SMP2),
- the significance in terms of risk to properties, infrastructure or the natural and historic environment and the degree of pressure that these are under. This was based on the information and assessment with the SMP2, or where further information was available. It aimed to make this risk more explicit.
- And the inherent uncertainties and dependencies associated with the need for change, identifying where studies or monitoring has been recommended and considering how this has been taken forward.

The initial focus of the review was within each Management Areas where for any policy unit, a change in policy or management overtime was the Preferred Plan in SMP2. However, it became clear through the walkover that a more holistic approach to each Management Area was required and so in fact most of the policy units wiithin each of the five islands has been considered in some detail through the review.

In each case, for these Management Areas, an individual but standardised review document has been prepared and which are presented in Appendix A. A new action plan for each area has been developed; building upon that prepared at the time of SMP2. This reflects the progress to date and focusses efforts on actions required to actively manage the intent of Preferred Plan with delivery partners and communities.

A particular point brought out in the new action plan sheets is ownership of different actions. While it may be that the Council for the Isles of Scilly, particularly with respect to internal departments, may wish to alter the ownership, it is considered important that associated with each action is an owner. Clearly this will need to be agreed between different organisations.

The action sheets also identify as far as possible partners associated with actions. This attempts to emphasise the need for joint / multi-agency working. It also attempts to highlight that with some actions, ultimately, the ownership of developing the approach to change may shift, particularly through involvement of local communities.

The action plan sheets are set out in such a manner so as to highlight where one action feeds into a subsequent action or series of actions. This again reflects a different manner of working, recognising that change is unlikely to be something that is managed all at once; it is an on-going process.

3.2 SMP2 Wide Actions

The SMP2 identified a number of SMP wide actions which remain relevant at many locations covered within this review. They are listed here to highlight them again, with more detail provided in the SMP2, and where appropriate within the Management Area Review documents presented in Appendix A.

- Wave dominated flooding strategy, including monitoring provision.
- Undertake assessment of harbour breakwater structures.
- Assessment of all locally important road routes at risk from erosion and/or flooding.
- Assessment of Coast Path and priority sections at risk.