

Newsletter Issue 4

Welcome to the fourth installment in the series of SES Newsletters, to be produced throughout the development of the strategies to keep people informed of topics of interest and the progress made in each of the estuaries.

In this issue we've included some answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Sea Level Rise and Climate Change on page 2. This is the first in a series of topics to be covered in the SES Newsletter series.

Blyth Estuary

Blyth Options Shortlisting Public Exhibition

A Public Exhibition took place on the 17th November at Southwold Pier, to outline the Shortlisted Flood Management Options being considered for the Blyth Estuary. The exhibition was well attended by the general public, with over 50 people attending and provided an opportunity for the public to ask the Project Team questions relating to the proposed short listed options.



The Southwold Pier Public Exhibition, November 2004

Consultation has now closed for comments on this stage of the Blyth Estuary Strategy.

Blyth Consultation Group

The Group held its second meeting on the 16th November. The Agency gave the Group a short presentation on the proposed shortlisted options, which was followed by a lively Question and Answer session. Issues raised by the Group included: navigation, siltation, sea level rise, maintenance works, protection of Tinkers Marshes, and how each option would affect each of these.

Alde and Ore Estuary

Alde and Ore Options Shortlisting Public Exhibitions

This stage for the strategy commenced in mid-December and is due to close on the 7th February 2005. This longer consultation period is to take into consideration the coinciding Christmas holiday period. The public exhibitions for this stage will be held at **Aldeburgh Church Hall on Tuesday 11th January** and **Orford Town Hall on Thursday 13th January 2005** between **2pm and 7pm**.

Deben Estuary

Deben General Options Public Exhibits

A series of **Public Exhibits** were held at various locations from mid-August to mid-September to present the **general flood management policies** being considered for the Deben Estuary Strategy.

The majority of consultees were members of the general public but comments were received from statutory consultees such as the National Trust, RSPB and English Heritage. On the whole consultees found it easy to comment and the consultation process was providing a clear insight into the strategy.

The option that was considered most unacceptable was 'No Active Intervention'; with 'Hold the Line', 'Managed Realignment' and a 'Tidal Barrier' being the most acceptable.

Modelling the Deben

A computer model has been created to represent the water flows and tidal levels within the Deben Estuary. This allows the impacts of future scenarios, such as sea level rise, to be assessed. The model has now been reviewed and endorsed by a panel of technical experts and a group of local representatives. The next phase will be to test the long list of options for the estuary using the model.

Future Consultation for the Deben Strategy

A public exhibition will be held early in 2005 to discuss the Shortlisted Flood Management options, from which a preferred estuary strategy will be chosen.

Some Frequently Asked Questions on Sea Level Rise and Climate Change

Is sea level rise really happening?

Predictions for East Anglia are a government figure of 6mm/year average over the next 100 years. This is made up of 4.5mm/year sea level rise and 1.5mm/year of isostatic adjustment (sinking of the land brought about by geological processes that occur locally). This average takes into account the future effects of climate change.

This is based on evidence provided by UKCIP (UK Climate Impacts Programme) and IPCC (Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change). It is the result of work by many hundreds of scientists and represents a balanced body of opinion, tested in the normal manner by peer review. The Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory has also studied sea level rise in East Anglia, and their work shows results for the period up to 2075 as "reasonably consistent with the Defra guidance for the East coast of 6 mm per year". Furthermore, there is much evidence that the Suffolk coast is retreating - at Benacre National Nature Reserve the rate of retreat is between 5 m and 10 m per year, and in the Suffolk and Essex estuaries this retreat has resulted in the loss of a large percentage of saltmarsh which has previously attenuated the wave energy and protected flood embankments.

If sea levels are rising why don't you just simply raise the defences?

Many of the sea walls are expensive to maintain and have low economic benefit in terms of what they protect and the expenditure needed to maintain them. It will also become increasingly costly to raise defences everywhere. Saltmarsh is a natural flood defence and has been declining in significant amounts, reducing the natural protection afforded to our coastline. Realigning in strategic places, such as estuaries, enables us to manage surge events like the 1953 event better. Tidal water is diverted sideways onto the realignment site and reduces surge water height travelling up the estuary.

We continue to provide sufficient protection and maintain a line of defences where it is economically or environmentally justified. However, there are some places where we may be able to realign the defences in a managed way and carry out works more efficiently without major impact on people or property. We want a balanced approach, keeping defences where they will be needed and moving them where doing so will reduce overall cost and result in a more sustainable and manageable estuary.

Why don't we just build defences like the Dutch?

Although the Dutch have historically 'built against' the sea, their approach to flood management is changing. The Dutch Vice Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Drs. J.M. de Vries published a report entitled "A Different Approach to Water - Water Management Policy in the 21st Century". This documented the Dutch Government Cabinet's position on water management policy in the 21st century and was fuelled by their concerns about increasing water levels in the rivers, flooding, and the accelerated rise in sea level.

It states that "for centuries, spatial planning in the low-lying Netherlands has been a matter of separating and maintaining the separation between land and water. The Dutch government concluded that the current water management system was not capable of responding to future developments. In order to keep the Netherlands safe, liveable and attractive in terms of water for inhabitants and investors for the century to come, a change in water management policy and in the way they approach water is required".

This change involves the idea that the Netherlands will have to make more frequent concessions in order to curb the growing risk of disaster due to flooding, limit water-related problems and be able to store water for expected periods of drought. This won't be achieved by building ever taller dykes or continued channel dredging, but by relinquishing areas of previously reclaimed land. This will cost space, but in return they will increase safety and limit water related problems. Only by relinquishing space can they set things right and if this is not done in a timely manner, water will sooner or later reclaim the space in its own, perhaps even dramatic, manner. Their argument to innovate water management policy appears to be widely accepted.

Further answers to a range of topics can be found on the SES website - www.suffolkestuaries.co.uk/FAQ.htm

Contacts

Members of the public who have indicated their wish to comment on the upcoming 3rd consultation stages for the Alde and Ore Strategy and Deben Strategy will receive a copy of the consultation pamphlet and comment form in the post. Alternatively there is the opportunity to comment via the SES website - www.suffolkestuaries.co.uk, or by contacting the Suffolk Estuarine Strategies Team who will be happy to answer any other SES queries you may have.

Nigel Pask, Project Manager
Environment Agency (Anglian region)
Kingfisher House, Goldhay Way
Orton Goldhay
Peterborough PE2 5ZR
Tel: 01733 464168
nigel.pask@environment-agency.gov.uk

Mike Steen, SES Local Liaison
Environment Agency
Cobham Road
Ipswich
Suffolk IP3 9JE
Telephone: 01473 706748
mike.steen@environment-agency.gov.uk

Matthew Clegg, Environmental Scientist
Black & Veatch Consulting Ltd.
Grosvenor House, 69 London Road
Redhill
Surrey RH1 1LQ
Tel: 01737 774155
suffolk-enquiries@bv.com

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of this newsletter please email:
suffolk-enquiries@bv.com

www.suffolkestuaries.co.uk

ISSUE 4 – Winter 2004/5