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Consultation on Coastal Change Policy

June 2009

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Scope of the consultation

Topic of this consultation:	This consultation sets out our ideas for how coastal communities can successfully adapt to the impacts of coastal change, and Government's role in supporting this. It is being launched in parallel to a pathfinder competition for local authorities to explore approaches to adaptation to coastal change in coastal communities.
Scope of this consultation:	Successful Pathfinder Authorities will provide essential evidence on what adaptation for coastal communities could look like which will support ongoing policy development. There are opportunities for stakeholders to give their views in development of policy around coastal change.
Geographical scope:	England
Impact Assessment:	Impact Assessments for this consultation can be found at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coastal-change/index.htm

Basic Information

To:	We would like to hear from those that live, work and govern in coastal areas and anyone with an interest in coastal change.
Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:	This consultation is led by Defra's Flood Management Division and has been developed in collaboration with other Government Departments, agencies and others with an interest (in particular EA, CLG, HMT, DfT, DCMS, NE, LGA, EH).
Duration:	15th June to 25 September 2009
Enquiries:	For all enquiries regarding this consultation, or for paper copies please contact: coastal.change@defra.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7238 1236
How to respond:	Please respond by e-mail to coastal.change@defra.gsi.gov.uk Or by post to: Defra

	Coastal Erosion Team Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Area 2D, Ergon House, Horsferry Road, London. SW1P 2AL.
Additional ways to become involved:	For large print copies of this consultation please contact: coastal.change@defra.gsi.gov.uk Or by post to: Defra Coastal Erosion Team Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Area 2D, Ergon House, Horsferry Road, London. SW1P 2AL.
After the consultation:	We will announce the outcome of this consultation and selected pathfinders in the autumn. A summary and copies of responses will be available 3 months after the close of the consultation from: The Defra Information Resource Centre Lower Ground Floor Ergon House Horseferry Road London SW1P 2AL tel: 020 7238 6575 email: defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk .
Compliance with the Code of Practice on Consultation:	This consultation complies with the Code of Practice on Consultation

Background

Previous engagement:	In addition to the ongoing collaboration described above, Defra held two stakeholder events in 2008 in developing this policy consultation. Government Departments, Agencies, local authorities, business interests and Coastal Action Groups were represented at the meetings. Participants felt that it was a priority to keep coastal communities sustainable by ensuring adaptation was focused on economic drivers and infrastructure essential to the community.

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Our coastline has always been shaped and moulded by the sea. As water collides with cliffs and shores it causes sediment or rocks to be broken down and carried out to sea or moved to be deposited on a different part of the coast.¹ It is this dynamic quality of the coastline that has created the variety of coastal environments that we know and cherish today. From the white cliffs of Dover, to the vast beaches of the east coast, and the breathtaking rock forms, cliffs and coves of the Jurassic coast, the evidence of a history of change is all around us.

1.2 This changing coastline has created opportunities for both people and the natural environment. As such, the coast is embedded in our lifestyles as we, like our ancestors, take advantage of the opportunities that it brings. Coastal communities have grown up as a result of opportunities for trade, industry, national defence and, in the more recent past, individual relaxation and tourism. In turn, these activities have made important contributions nationally. For example, the 2008 UK Travel Survey showed that 19% of trips in England were made to the seaside, with these trips involving 22% of the total amount spent on trips in England (or £3.615bn).²

1.3 As well as creating opportunities, coastal change³ can pose a threat to the communities, infrastructure and environments that exist on the coast. This threat sits alongside others associated with the sea such as coastal flooding. We know from the latest science on climate change that the risks of coastal erosion and flooding will increase over the next 100 years, with rising sea levels and the increased intensity, severity and frequency of coastal storms speeding up these natural processes.

1.4 Managing something as dynamic as the changing coast requires an equally dynamic approach from both government and coastal communities. The Government is committed to effective management of flood and coastal erosion risk and some £2.15 billion is being invested in England over the current three year spending review period. We will defend where it is sustainable and affordable to do so. However, there will be some locations where it is not sustainable or desirable to either build new defence structures or maintain existing ones. Where this is the case, communities will need to start preparing for and managing change. We will seek to support communities in this process of adapting to both the physical effects of coastal change and the social and economic impacts that can accompany this. For just as the sea has always changed our coastline, our coastal communities will need to adapt to this change.

¹ <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/107495.aspx>

² 2008 UK Travel Survey – note that trips are understood as journeys away from home involving an overnight stay; spend includes costs paid in advance of the trip, during the trip itself, and any bills relating to the trip received after returning home.

³ See glossary for definition.

1.5 This consultation sets out our ideas for how coastal communities can successfully adapt to the impacts of coastal change, and Government's role in supporting this. It is part of a wider programme of work that looks at supporting communities adapt to increasing risks of both flooding and coastal erosion. The consultation will run until 25th September 2009.

1.6 We want to find out more about what planning for and managing coastal change means for local authorities and their communities. Therefore, in parallel to the consultation, we invite bids from local authorities interested in becoming coastal change pathfinders. These pathfinders will pilot a new £11 million coastal change fund and will be able to explore some of the draft ideas and guidance set out in sections 4 and 5 of this consultation. Our intention is that, in light of consultation responses, this material will be refreshed as a "prospectus" to help guide and support pathfinders.

1.7 The deadline for bids to be received from local authorities interested in becoming coastal change pathfinders is 11th September 2009.

1.8 As well as being available for use by pathfinders in spearheading approaches to supporting community adaptation, we are also consulting on making the fund available to all coastal local authorities to enable them to provide some practical support to individuals in their area who suffer total loss of a home due to coastal erosion.

1.9 We will announce the outcome of this consultation and confirm selected pathfinders in the autumn. The pathfinder programme will then run until spring 2011. Our intention is that the lessons learned from the pathfinder programme will inform future developments in guidance and/or policy.

In this consultation we are:-

- Announcing the creation of a coastal change fund of up to £11 million to support community adaptation to coastal change (see pg 18).
- Inviting bids from local authorities interested in becoming coastal change pathfinders to pilot the fund, through active engagement with their communities (see pg 19).
- Asking for views on a proposed approach to enabling local authorities to provide practical assistance to local homeowners experiencing complete loss of a home as a result of coastal erosion (see pg 21).
- Setting out some draft ideas and guidance on approaches that pathfinders (and others) could explore to:-

- Plan for adaptation (pg 26); and
- Manage change, bearing in mind all the components that make up a community:
 - Local buildings and properties (pg 34).
 - Business (pg 35).
 - Local and community infrastructure (pg 39).
 - The natural environment (pg 41).
 - The historic environment (pg 43).

2 Background

Our changing coastline

2.1 The English coastline has always been subject to continuous weathering from natural processes, which have led to coastal erosion, instability and flooding. The effects of these processes vary considerably from one part of the coastline to another depending on the geological nature of the coast, the durability of exposed rocks and materials, and the waves, tides and storm surges to which they are exposed. In particular, the rate at which coastal change happens varies from place to place, from close to zero metres a year in some locations, to up to 1.8 metres in others. In some places, change will happen gradually whilst in others change will manifest itself through events such as landslips, where many metres of land may be lost once every five or ten years.

2.2 Whilst these natural processes present risks to people living and working in coastal environments, the beautiful beaches, dramatic cliffs and many other features that we enjoy would not exist without them.

2.3 Britain's continually changing coastline meant that, until about 10,000 years ago, a land bridge enabled our ancestors to walk between what we now recognise as Norfolk to Holland and Denmark. The ending of the last ice age then led to a prolonged period of sea level rise, resulting in the formation of the North Sea and the island nation that we have today. However, sea levels continued to rise at a more gradual rate and the coast did not stop changing at the end of the ice age. The coast has continued to change due to a combination of human interventions and natural processes.

A history of coastal change

There is documentary evidence that at least 173 coastal settlements were either lost or severely damaged between around 1250 -1600, (especially along the coasts of Holderness, Lincolnshire, East Anglia and parts of the south coast), largely as a consequence of an exceptionally stormy climatic phase. The most significant loss was of Dunwich, Suffolk. Dunwich was a major town in the early medieval period: it had three churches and 290 burghers in 1086, and was able to provide 40 ships for Henry III in 1229 during the French Wars. The harbour was progressively choked by shingle, damaged by storms from 1286 onwards, and finally destroyed by a storm of 1326. Thereafter the rest of the town was progressively lost by cliff erosion, with major losses in 1328, 1347 and on into the 16th century. Today only a small remnant of the medieval town, and a modern village, survive.

2.4 Climate change is already increasing flood and coastal erosion risk and will continue to do so in the future through projected sea level rise together with the potential increase in the intensity, severity and frequency of coastal storms. Government is committed to understanding how the science on climate change informs all aspects of our approach to managing the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, including how we fund flood and coastal erosion risk management and support communities in adapting.

The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change⁴ said:

“Adaptation will be crucial in reducing vulnerability to climate change and is the only way to cope with the impacts that are inevitable over the next few decades...Without early and strong mitigation, the costs of adaptation rise sharply... Governments have a role to play in making adaptation happen, starting now, providing both policy guidelines and economic and institutional support”

How we manage the coast

2.5 There are a number of organisations with responsibility or interest in coastal management. Government is committed to improving integration of the different management processes in coastal areas and published a strategy on promoting an integrated approach in January 2009. The Strategy⁵ contains the Government's vision and objectives for the process of coastal management. It also explains how the Marine and Coastal Access Bill and other work across Government Departments will contribute to coastal integration, while setting out a series of further actions we are committed to taking forward.

2.6 In April 2008, the Environment Agency was given responsibility for an overview of the English⁶ coastline to ensure that decisions about how we physically manage the coast are made in a joined-up manner. This means that, working in partnership with local authorities and other coastal bodies, the Environment Agency can provide a consistent approach to managing coastal risks which takes account of social and economic issues as well as the natural forces that shape the coast.

⁴ *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* (October 2006), available at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm

⁵ *A strategy for promoting an integrated approach to the management of coastal areas in England*, available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/pdf/environment/iczm/iczm-strategy-england.pdf>

⁶ In Wales, overall policy responsibility for coastal flood and erosion risk management remains with the Welsh Assembly Government, with the Environment Agency Wales and local authorities carrying out works on the ground and developing Shoreline Management Plans.

Shoreline Management Plans

2.7 Together with local authorities, the Environment Agency manages the physical risks of both coastal erosion and flooding, through its strategic oversight for the production and quality control of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs). SMPs provide a large-scale assessment of the physical risks associated with coastal processes and present a long term policy framework to reduce these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner. An SMP is a high level document that forms an important element of the strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management. Coastal groups, made up primarily of coastal district authorities and other bodies with coastal defence responsibilities, provide a forum for discussion and co-operation and play an important part in the development of SMPs for their area.

2.8 SMPs are developed through consultation with local communities and are based on the best available science on climate change and understanding of coastal processes. As such, these will highlight where investment in defence works could deliver a high benefit to the taxpayer and where – in future – there may need to be changes in coastal defence policy due to rising sea levels or changes to the landscape caused by coastal processes (see 2.16 below for an overview of how the Government funds flood and coastal erosion risk management).

2.9 As well as informing decisions on investment, SMPs also inform regional and local spatial planning strategies (Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks) to ensure inappropriate development does not take place in areas that are at risk of flooding or erosion either now or in the future.

2.10 The first generation of SMPs was completed in the 1990s. Following a review of the strengths and weaknesses of these and full consultation, updated guidance on SMPs was published in 2001. That guidance concluded that the first generation SMPs were excellent high-level strategic documents but that further research was needed into how the coast would evolve. Work is now underway on the second generation of SMPs which are due to be completed by December 2010.

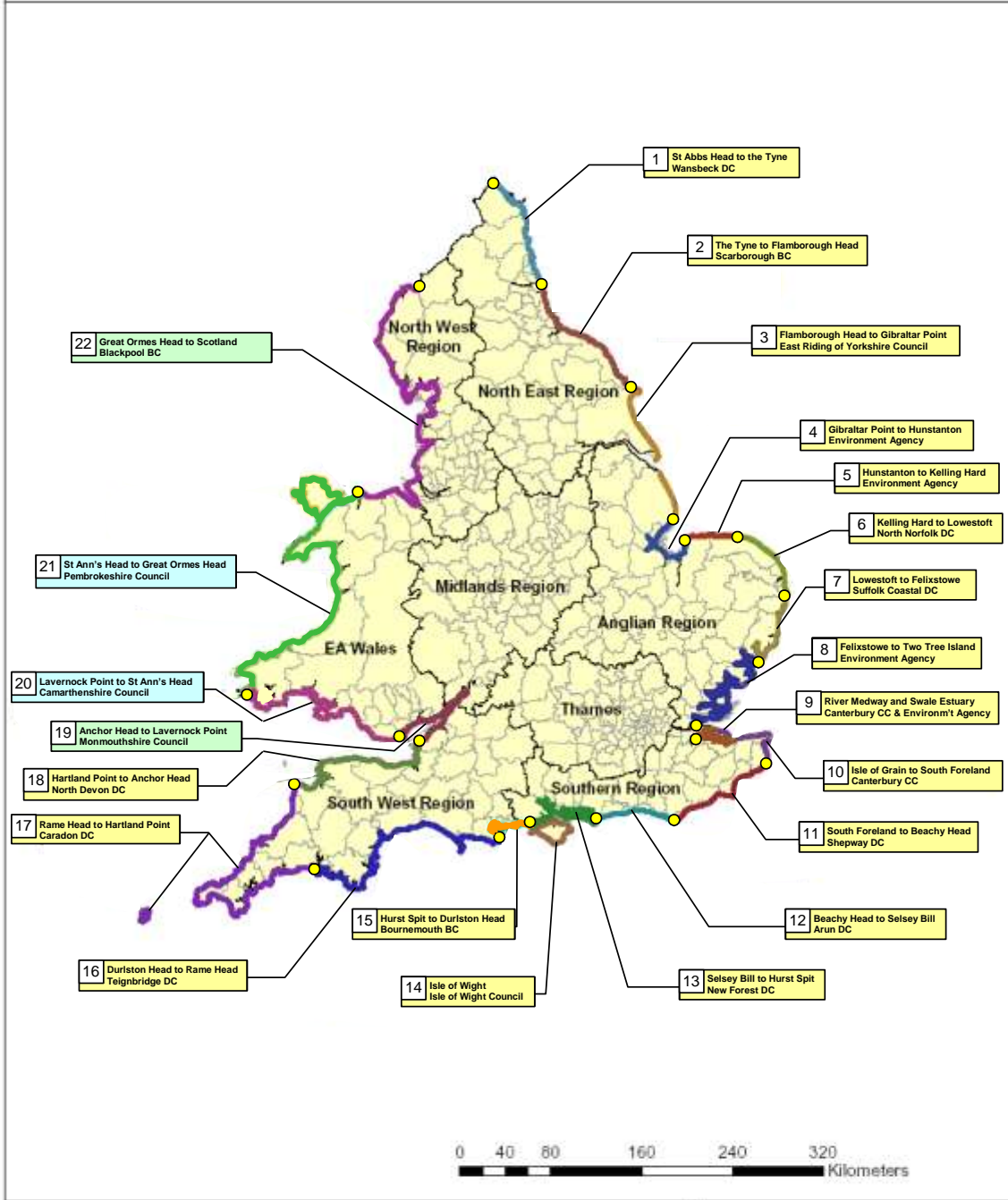
2.11 The data and information on coastal erosion that emerges from this work will be rolled out as part of the engagement and consultation on the second generation of SMPs wherever possible, so that communities can have the opportunity to consider the emerging data and respective SMP at the same time. The Environment Agency is employing local engagement officers to improve consultation and engagement with communities on the emerging SMPs. The aim is to take a collaborative approach with local authorities and some of the engagement officers will work from local authority offices. These officers will use the principles developed under the Environment Agency's own Building Trust

with Communities approach. This stresses the importance of community involvement at an early stage so those affected by future policies can be “brought along the journey” towards policy decisions together and feel that their views have been considered seriously and transparently.

2.12 The following map shows the shoreline management areas for the second generation SMPs. More information on how to find out about the SMP for a particular area is available on the Environment Agency’s website.⁷

⁷ See <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/105014.aspx>

EA Strategic Overview Shoreline Management Plans 2nd Generation



SMP Ref. No.	SMP Location
	Lead Authority

- English
- Welsh
- Cross border

Figure prepared 17 February 2009

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Environment Agency, 100026380, 2006

This map is based on Ordnance Survey Landline data and produced for the Environment Agency with the permission of Ordnance Survey. Aerial imagery is copyright Getmapping plc, all rights reserved. Licence number 22047.

2.13 As with the first generation of SMPs, work with local communities on the second generation will identify a range of responses for managing coastal erosion risk. There will be some areas where the response involves a decision not to intervene, but instead allow nature to define the position of the shoreline either by not building new defences or not maintaining existing ones.

2.14 This could be due to a wide range of reasons, for example because the provision of defences in one area could interfere with the natural flow of beach sediment along the coastline and cause greater erosion rates further down the coast. The findings from a recent workshop organised by the Tyndall Centre highlighted that protecting one area of the coast could lead to other areas being worse off⁸. For example, in North Norfolk the SMP makes clear that the shoreline is an integrated natural environment and that not maintaining some defences is important to generate sediment transfer that will both protect other communities and ensure a continuous beachfront (bearing in mind the economic benefits that beaches can bring).

2.15 The approach to investment in defences is not covered by this consultation, which instead focuses on supporting communities to adapt to coastal change where it is not sustainable to either build new defences or maintain existing ones. However, a brief overview of the approach to funding defences is given below.

How we fund coastal defence works

2.16 The Government is committed to effective management of flood and coastal erosion risk and some £2.15 billion is being invested in England over the current three year spending review period (CSR07: 2008/9 – 2010/11). Annual investment has doubled in cash terms in the last ten years. Of the £2.15 billion a minimum of £110 million will be allocated to coastal projects undertaken by local authorities.

2.17 We defend where it is sustainable and affordable to do so, but it will not be possible to protect every stretch of coastline. Defences must be technically sensible and sustainable over time, and we must ensure value for money is achieved with public funds, paid for by taxpayers across the country. Public money is therefore prioritised in order to achieve maximum benefit from it for the country and society as a whole. For example, the EA takes a risk based approach, directing its resources to areas of highest risk and where investment per £1 yields the greatest benefits. This might mean that projects are less likely to go ahead in sparsely populated areas as opposed to projects which protect larger numbers of people and property for a given cost.

⁸ Tim O'Riordan (2008) 'How do we create a sustainable coastline?' Summary of Tyndall Assembly Workshop – 10th September, 2008 University of East Anglia, Norwich

2.18 But central government funding is not the only possibility. Investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management brings great local and regional benefit, in terms of reducing damage to land, people and property, the economy and environment. It can also boost tourism and amenity benefits; regenerating local economies and creating jobs.

2.19 The Environment Agency will shortly be publishing a Long Term Investment Strategy which will set out an assessment of the need for and benefits from investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management over the next 25 years in light of anticipated climate change. In his review of the 2007 floods⁹, Sir Michael Pitt concluded that this long term approach should not assume that all future costs should be met centrally, and that aligning those who benefit with those who pay will bring greater efficiency and greater responsiveness from those carrying out the work. Given the substantial local benefits involved, he recommended that local areas be encouraged to invest in their own protection, and said that use of a range of funding sources should be the norm as opposed to the exception. The Government supports this view and in our response to Sir Michael's report suggested that county and unitary authorities should consider whether local priorities can be funded differently if full central government funding can't be justified¹⁰.

2.20 Local authorities and communities already have a range of options available to them to supplement national funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management. These include Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC) levies on counties and unitary authorities. The draft Flood and Water Management Bill includes proposals to extend the role of RFDCs to cover coastal erosion, through new Regional Flood and Coastal Committees¹¹. These new committees would increase democratic input into local decisions and help co-ordinate flood and coastal erosion risk management. To support the extension of the Committees' role to cover coastal erosion, the draft Bill also proposes extending the existing levying powers of RFDCs to coastal erosion risk management. More and more local authorities, and development agencies, are working individually with the Environment Agency, to consider options and find out what more can be achieved in their area if they were able to commit additional money. For example, the East Midlands Development Agency and Newark District Council are working with the Environment Agency to secure over £4million of funding between them to solve a number of issues and deliver major benefits to the community. Such approaches should be possible on the coast as much as inland.

⁹ *The Pitt Review: Lessons learned from the 2007 floods*, available at <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/pittreview/thepittreview.html>

¹⁰ Recommendation 24, *The Government's response to Sir Michael Pitt's review of the Summer 2007 floods*, available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/floods07/Govtresptopitt.pdf>

¹¹ See clauses 66-73 of the Draft Floods and Water Bill, available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/flood-water-bill/index.htm>

2.21 To ensure a consistent approach to seeking and handling external contributions towards projects across the country, the Environment Agency are publishing a new policy statement on the issue. It will mean contributions from major beneficiaries of risk management projects - such as businesses, developers and authorities - will be routinely sought in order to bring down the cost of projects to the taxpayer and make the central government funds available go further. The policy will encourage all of those that have an interest in seeing projects delivered to come together and make things happen that otherwise may not be possible.

2.22 Defra will also shortly be introducing a new policy statement on the appraisal of flood and coastal erosion risk management measures. The statement will cover high level policy on the appraisal and selection of flood and coastal risk management options (in plans, strategies and individual schemes) with the objectives of ensuring that the appropriate approach is taken and taxpayers' money is invested in works which achieve maximum overall benefit. The new policy will encourage the assessment of a greater range of benefits and options. For example, it will help ensure that impacts that are too difficult to value in monetary terms are still taken into account and affect the choices made. It will also provide greater flexibility for assessing and funding projects that benefit the local economy from a mix of national and local funding sources. As before, impacts on agricultural land, the environment and businesses as well as on people and property will be considered, However, taxpayer funds will still be allocated based on delivering the greatest benefit to the nation and society as a whole. The policy will encourage local contributions to be sought to pay for the local benefits.

How we help communities adapt to flood and erosion risk

2.23 The Government's Strategy Making Space for Water¹² committed to managing flood and erosion risk in a sustainable manner, marking a move towards a risk management approach which is climate change proofed. The strategy also committed to working with communities to help them to manage these higher risks.

2.24 Up to £28 million of Defra's Comprehensive Spending Review settlement for 2008 – 2011 was made available to support a programme of activities designed to support communities adapt to flooding and coastal erosion. We have already made significant progress with this programme through, for example:

- **Better information about risk:** the Environment Agency has published flood risk maps, and improved the information available

¹² <http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/strategy.htm>

around Shoreline Management Plans so that people are better able to engage with their development.

- **Better engagement in managing risk:** the Environment Agency has, and continues to deliver this through its 'Building Trust with Communities' programme.
- **Individual Household Measures:** a £5 million grant scheme has been established to help individual households introduce resistance and resilience measures which will offer protection from flood risk.
- **Role of the Planning System:** Planning Policy Statement 25 introduced a new risk-based approach to managing development in flood-risk areas.

2.25 Many of these activities focus on adapting to flood risk and, as such, will be relevant on both the coast and inland. However, the existing programme does not provide any specific support to communities in adapting to coastal change. The draft policy, guidance and ideas set out in this consultation, together with the pathfinder programme, are intended to help plug this gap, with up to £11 million from the programme's budget available to support this. As such, this document is intended to complement this wider programme of activity by providing support to communities on planning for, and adapting to, the impacts of coastal change.

2.26 Alongside this, other initiatives from the Making Space for Water programme are continuing to develop. For example, the Environment Agency will publish new maps showing coastal erosion risk on their website from the autumn of 2009. These will complement the existing flood maps and be released alongside the new SMP for each area. Research into how to better integrate SMPs into the planning process continues, and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) will soon be consulting on new planning policy on coastal change (see 4.19).

3 Supporting communities in adapting to coastal change

3.1 Government is committed to maintaining sustainable coastal communities. This means that, where coastal change happens, all aspects of the affected communities need to be supported to help ensure they remain attractive places for people to live in and visit, and support thriving local economies. Local communities need to be informed, engaged and enabled to take an active part in deciding what happens locally. This consultation is about how we can provide practical support for coastal communities, including individuals, in adapting to coastal change now and in the future.

3.2 Work undertaken on behalf of the Department by Scott-Wilson on understanding local authority activities in relation to managing the impacts of coastal change, observed that current local authority coastal activity focuses on coastal erosion risk management, with some authorities only just starting to think about what adapting to coastal change could mean. This suggests that there is more work that needs to be done to understand what planning for and managing adaptation to coastal change means for local authorities and their communities.

3.3 In the light of this, alongside this consultation, the Government is inviting bids from local authorities¹³ wishing to become coastal change pathfinders to pilot a new coastal change fund. Our intention is that the selected pathfinders will explore ways in which the fund can be used to better engage and support communities as they adjust to the impacts of coastal change. It will also enable them to design and deliver local solutions that help communities with the transition associated with change. Initial guidance and ideas on what planning for and managing change could look like are set out in sections 4 and 5 of this consultation for selected pathfinders to draw from on and build on.

Coastal change fund

3.4 The purpose of this fund is to help support communities in planning for and adapting to coastal change¹⁴. In particular, the fund is intended to support the community adaptation planning and engagement described in section 4, building on and enhancing existing community engagement activities (such as those related to Shoreline Management Plans and spatial planning strategies).

3.5 The fund can also be used by pathfinders to support delivery of adaptation activities that emerge from the adaptation planning process, supplementing existing public and private investment to focus activity on adaptation. These

¹³ By Local Authorities we mean County, Unitary and District/Borough Councils. Town and Parish Councils are not eligible to be lead applicants, but should work with the relevant eligible Local Authorities.

¹⁴ See glossary for definition.

could include practical measures designed to help communities (including individuals) with the transition and change associated with adaptation. In this way, we envisage the coastal change fund acting as a catalyst for integrating community adaptation into mainstream delivery of local services and investment, and into private decision-making and business planning activities.

3.6 There are many significant funding streams currently supporting the aspiration of delivering sustainable coastal communities. The work undertaken by Scott-Wilson referred to above identified a number of existing funding streams. These include, central Government grants, EU structural fund grants, grants and contributions from private developers and leaseholders, national lottery grants, use of capital receipts, revenue finance of capital expenditure, supported capital expenditure, and other resources. The coastal change fund should be seen as a complementary source of funding which can be used to supplement these activities and funding streams where the focus is on coastal change adaptation.

3.7 We are also proposing that part of the fund should be made available to cover some of the transition costs currently incurred by individual homeowners who experience total loss of a home due to coastal erosion. We are inviting views on proposals to make a grant available to local authorities to cover a baseline level of assistance to help with the immediate demolition and moving requirements that homeowners losing a property to coastal erosion face. These proposals are set out in section 3.16 below.

3.8 Up to £3 million is available for the coastal change fund for the remainder of the current financial year, and up to £8 million for the 2010/11 financial year. This will enable successful pathfinders to get work quickly underway with their communities on understanding the potential future changes and starting to plan for and manage these. In the light of the experience of the pathfinders and responses to this consultation, we will review whether there is a case for continuing with the coastal change fund in future, subject to wider decisions on funding. Our long term aim, in line with overall principles for effective delegation to local areas, and streamlined local government finance, is that adaptation to coastal change should be part of mainstream decision-making and funding.

Pathfinders

3.9 Coastal change pathfinders will be at the forefront of work to explore approaches which support communities in adapting to coastal change. Helping local people and places with the transition associated with adaptation will mean different things in different places. Approaches could range from projects to help maintain beach car parks or access points damaged by coastal change; to exploring ways of supporting “roll-back”; to buy and lease back schemes designed to smooth the transition where a property is at risk of being lost in the near future. These and other ideas are set out in sections 4 and 5 of this

consultation. We welcome views on these and want the lessons learned from the pathfinders, and the good practice they generate, to be shared and reviewed to inform development of future policy and guidance.

3.10 The deadline for bids to be received is 11th September 2009. Local authorities interested in becoming pathfinders should contact coastal.change@defra.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7238 1236 for more details on how to bid. We will be setting up a panel of those with experience relevant to adapting to coastal change to consider bids. Bids will be expected to demonstrate the following:

- Evidence of the risk of coastal change that the community is facing, with priority being given to areas facing significant or immediate challenge.
- The contribution proposed spending will make to the overall aim of supporting communities in adapting to coastal change in a way that ensures continuity of community.
- Broad objectives and outcomes – with identified and timetabled deliverables, including consideration of how the work undertaken during the pathfinder could be carried forward in the long-term.
- Commitment to working with existing funding streams; and identifying and exploring opportunities for income generation and working alongside other private contributions.
- Commitment to work with local partners (both public and private), and engage with the local community. We will be particularly interested in approaches which seek to support better informed communities able to shape decisions and innovative approaches to build local adaptation solutions.
- How the approach will link up with local spatial planning and enable the local community to influence and shape strategic decision-making for their areas.
- Clear commitment at senior level to share lessons and participate in wider evaluation of the pathfinder programme.

3.11 As every community will be different, we do not propose to set exact policy on what types of adaptation projects would be appropriate for pathfinders to explore. Instead, we have set out some criteria below which these projects would be expected to meet. We have also identified in sections 4 and 5 of this consultation a number of areas that would need to be considered in planning for and managing adaptation. We have also suggested some examples of schemes and approaches that we would be keen for pathfinders to explore.

3.12 We envisage that projects and approaches to using the fund explored by pathfinders should meet the following criteria:

- The focus should be on adapting to coastal change (although approaches that additionally support adaptation to coastal flooding risk could also be explored).
- The emphasis should be on providing benefits to the wider community where these are proportionate to the costs.
- The focus should be on those sections of the community that are the most vulnerable to the impacts of coastal change.
- Approaches should tie in with a long-term plan for change within the community and be supported through extensive community engagement and discussion.

Pathfinders: Monitoring and review

3.13 We are intending to announce the successful pathfinders in the autumn with a view to them running for the remainder of the current spending review period (i.e. until the end of March 2011). In the light of the lessons learned from the pathfinders we will review whether there is a case for the coastal change fund being made more widely available in future years, subject to other funding decisions.

3.14 Successful pathfinders will be expected to report on their experience as a pathfinder showing how they engaged their communities; what activities and outcomes were achieved as a result of the coastal change fund and local funding, and how the community experienced these benefits. This in turn will contribute to a shared understanding of good practice and lessons learned that will enable the experience of the pathfinders to be shared with other local authorities and communities, and will inform future policy decisions after the pathfinder programme has drawn to a close.

3.15 We will evaluate the pathfinder programme to assess how far it has met its objectives. We will expect pathfinders to co-operate with Defra in this. The pathfinder programme is a learning programme and we want to capture and share innovative projects and processes funded by the programme.

Coastal erosion assistance package

3.16 We are also seeking views in this consultation on proposals for the coastal change fund to be made available to cover some of the immediate practical costs incurred when a residential property is lost as a result of coastal erosion.

3.17 Complete loss of a home as a result of coastal erosion is only likely to affect a very small number of homeowners in any given year. Whilst our understanding of risk is improving, and will continue to improve through the second generation of SMPs (see section 2.7 above), it is difficult to estimate the

likely numbers of affected properties. Our current working estimate is that approximately 200 residential properties could be lost over the next 20 years.

3.18 The numbers of properties at risk could rise over the next 50 to 100 years, particularly as a result of climate change. We are committed to maintaining sustainable coastal communities. Areas where people want to live and where their choice to do so is based on an informed understanding of risk which is reflected in their purchase of property. In the longer-term, our work to improve the provision of information about coastal change will help the coastal housing market adjust, as a whole, to reflect the risks associated with buying a property on some parts of the coast.

3.19 In the meantime, this consultation considers how to provide appropriate practical support to lessen the burden on individuals when they experience complete loss of their home to coastal erosion. In doing so, we are not proposing to depart from the policy of successive Governments of not offering compensation for private assets lost as result of coastal erosion.

Compensation and coastal change

The basis of the longstanding policy not to pay compensation for properties lost as a result of coastal erosion is that no-one has the statutory right to flood or erosion protection, and therefore where protection cannot be provided, the homeowner cannot claim compensation. The homeowner does have the right to be engaged in the process of appraising whether investment to reduce the risk is justified, and for decisions to be made consistently and in an open and transparent manner. This is not least to enable people to make informed, risk-based decisions.

There is also currently provision within the existing statutory framework¹⁵ for the Environment Agency to pay compensation where it intentionally reduces the level of protection to a property for example by lowering or removing defences to help manage the risk elsewhere. Where this is the case a claim for compensation could be made.

3.20 The proposed approach set out below would sit alongside existing support mechanisms. In particular, households facing complete loss of their home to coastal erosion already automatically have access to the existing housing

¹⁵ The legal basis for this is in Schedule 21, paragraph 5 of the Water Resources Act 1991 which states: "Where injury is sustained by any person by reason of the exercise by the Agency of any powers under section 165(1) to (3) of this Act the Agency shall be liable to make full compensation to the injured party."

support framework. They are encouraged to seek timely advice from their local authorities to discuss existing sources of help and advice with housing. Local authorities can advise on a range of housing options that may be appropriate to the household. These include renting in the social and private rented sector and Low Cost Home Ownership schemes.

Case Study

East Riding District Council carry out a twice yearly cliff line survey using Global Positioning System techniques. In 2008, this survey identified an imminent risk to a resident living in a house which was only 11m from the edge of a 16m high cliff where losses in excess of this have previously occurred in one slip.

In the light of this analysis the Coastal Officer visited the resident in question to advise him of the risks associated with continuing to live in the property. The resident recognised that they would need to move so the Coastal Officer liaised with the Housing Services Manager Council's housing team who found the resident alternative accommodation.

3.21 Properties that face an imminent risk of loss may be eligible for a Council Tax revaluation and may also be taken out of Council Tax banding. Home owners whose dwellings suffer a "material reduction"¹⁶, as defined in s24 (10) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, should contact their local Valuation Officer¹⁷.

What are we consulting on?

3.22 At the point where a home is lost or becomes unsafe to live in because total loss due to erosion is imminent, the homeowner is liable for the costs of demolishing the property to make it safe. Insurance is not normally available to homes at risk of erosion for these and other costs such as those associated with moving house. These costs are incurred at a time when the homeowner may be facing financial hardship due to the loss of the property and the anxiety and distress this can bring.

3.23 In recognition of this, some local authorities have assisted homeowners with the costs of demolition of their property. We are consulting on mainstreaming this good practice and enabling all coastal local authorities to pay demolition costs and make some support available to help with the other practical costs of moving, by giving them access to a grant per property for this purpose.

¹⁶ "material reduction", in relation to the value of a dwelling, means any reduction which is caused (in whole or in part) by the demolition of any part of the dwelling, any change in the physical state of the dwelling's locality or any adaptation of the dwelling to make it suitable for use by a physically disabled person;

¹⁷ http://www.voa.gov.uk/council_tax/index.htm

3.24 We propose that this assistance grant would provide:

- Assistance with moving to a new home of up to £1,000 (towards costs associated with removals, redirection of post, reconnection of services etc.); and
- The costs of demolishing the property for which the homeowner is liable, enabling local authorities to make provision for demolishing properties safely at the public expense rather than charging the home owner. Demolition costs are expected to be approximately £3,000 per property (but could be up to £5,000 depending upon the size and hazards of the property).

3.25 Mainstreaming this good practice by giving authorities access to grants for demolition and some moving costs should remove the burden associated with some of the immediate practical difficulties of losing a home as a result of erosion, from homeowners. It will also assist prompt and safe demolition in a way that benefits the wider community in terms of local amenity. This demolition and moving assistance package would be funded by the Coastal Change Fund and would not be limited to properties within selected pathfinders.

3.26 Given that the practical issues that the proposed scheme will cover will be encountered in all cases of loss as a result of coastal erosion, our intention is that the assistance grant would be available in areas regardless of whether the property had been previously defended or not and where the property:

- is at imminent risk, is vacated in agreement with the authority, is declared unsafe¹⁸ or is lost as a result of coastal erosion (or coastal slip) during the running life of the scheme;
- is the sole residential property of the homeowner (i.e. not a second home, buy to let or other type of investment property);
- is a fixed dwelling (i.e. is not a movable home such as a caravan or temporary structure);
- was purchased before this consultation document was launched; and
- was vacated by agreement, demolished or lost to erosion after this consultation document was launched (subject to the outcome of this consultation and establishment of an appropriate payment mechanism for any grant that is introduced, claims will be eligible backdated to the launch date of this consultation).

3.27 Local authorities currently have statutory duties regarding the process for demolition of unsafe properties. We propose that the demolition and moving assistance grants scheme would run in parallel to Authorities' current duties. This will keep administration costs for the process to a minimum.

¹⁸ (s)265 1985 Housing Act http://www.uk-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1985/cukpga_19850068_en_22#pt9-pb1-11g253

3.28 The proposed assistance scheme is designed as a temporary measure to provide practical assistance to homeowners in the interim period whilst understanding of the risks associated with coastal erosion improves. In the future, information published on coastal change in the SMPs and national data set will inform coastal home purchasers. Over time we expect this to influence the markets so that purchasers' investments reflect the risks.

3.29 Subject to the outcome of this consultation, we propose that the assistance package is subject to regular review. This will reflect whether funding is available and how far understanding of risks associated with coastal erosion has improved. Future availability of the assistance grant is subject to overall affordability and the fiscal position with Defra's Flood Management Budget.

We ask for your views:

- Do you agree that it is appropriate for Government to make available public funds to local authorities to cover demolition costs for which private homeowners are currently liable?
- Is the homeowner assistance package set at the right level to strike the balance between individuals taking responsibility for their investment decisions, and ensuring that local authorities are able to provide practical assistance to homeowners who lose their home as a result of erosion? If not how could this be done?
- How should the payment mechanism for the demolition and moving assistance grant work? What evidence could be provided to Defra to support a claim for demolition and moving costs?
- Apart from the current plans to provide more information on coastal erosion risk through maps etc, what other ways could home buyers be informed about purchasing on areas of the coast at risk from coastal erosion and to factor this in to their purchase?

4 Preparing and planning for change

4.1 This section considers how coastal communities can plan for coastal change, and how to ensure that communities are at the centre of any discussions. The processes and ideas set out in this chapter provide many of the routes to deliver the approaches to managing change set out in section 5.

4.2 Government and partners need to support communities in engaging with these discussions, and enabling them to influence outcomes. We propose that local authorities lead this process and will shortly be publishing new draft guidance which offers help and advice to all partners on how to work with communities on managing coastal change. The spatial planning process has a key role here and the Government will soon be seeking views on new national planning policy on development and coastal change. This will propose a strategic risk-based approach to managing future physical changes to the coast, so that the long-term adaptation of communities can be planned whilst allowing necessary development that is appropriate and safe.

Community adaptation planning and engagement

4.3 Adaptation is the process of becoming adjusted to new conditions, in a way that makes individuals, communities or systems better suited to their environment. The definition of successful adaptation will therefore depend on perspective: a community facing permanent loss may see things differently to communities who are not immediately at risk. Similarly, successful adaptation will depend on a wide variety of socio-economic conditions. Some locations have high levels of social well-being, with other locations facing greater levels of deprivation. These impacts will set the tone for the challenge and process of involving communities in preparing and planning for adaptation. We have referred to this process as 'community adaptation planning and engagement'.

4.4 To embark on this journey, communities need to be supported to understand and be part of the process, and to be involved in the outcomes that will shape the future of their community. Engagement needs to build on what is already there, and start where the community is currently at. There needs to be an open and honest debate on what coastal change means, and agreement on the basic problems to be addressed in terms of infrastructure, buildings, habitats and livelihoods. The process of building vision, structures, accountability, trust and responsibilities is a long term one, particularly if partnerships are genuinely community based.

4.5 While consideration of risks should be taken into account at all levels of governance, it is at the community level where a coherent and acceptable response to managing the impacts of change can be achieved. To be successful, this should bring together all parts of a community including homeowners, local businesses and landowners, as well as other parts of the

community fabric that contribute to the shape and functioning of a place (e.g. heritage and natural assets that attract tourism). There is no definitive list of all the partners that could be involved as this will vary from place to place, for example, in some areas, parish council networks may have a key role.

East of England Coastal Initiative

The East of England Coastal Initiative is a partnership aiming to integrate responses to the twin challenges of coastal change and coastal deprivation facing the region. This initiative brings together a wide range of government, local councils, non-government, voluntary, and business groups. Their combined knowledge and resources will be used to create an effective, stream-lined approach that involves the local communities to tackle some of the economic, social and environmental challenges the coastal area faces, and build new and sustainable opportunities for coastal communities. By working together, the Initiative will achieve more than any one body working alone. One element of the Initiative's work so far has been the provision of evidence to Defra to support the policy-making process. This has included engaging with regional bodies and local authorities in the region to test ideas and generate suggestions. We propose continued use of regional and local mechanisms and networks, such as the East of England Coastal Initiative during this consultation and beyond.

4.6 We will be shortly be publishing a working draft of guidance on how all partners can work together with communities on planning for change, and how to join these discussions up with other planning and funding mechanisms. Selected pathfinders will be able to trial this guidance and will be expected to be at the forefront of putting community adaptation planning and engagement into practice. They will be able to use the coastal change fund to support initial engagement activity, awareness raising of the risks and implications of adaptation, and subsequent involvement of communities.

How are communities currently involved?

4.7 There has been significant progress in understanding how important it is to work with communities when discussing potential changes over the past few years. The Making Space for Water Strategy led to several important research projects and the new Environment Agency approach called 'Building Trust with Communities'. The Environment Agency have also invested in additional staff to help deliver better community engagement, providing funding for new coastal engagement officers around the English coastline. Whilst the primary role of these officers will be to raise awareness of the Environment Agency's forthcoming coastal erosion risk maps and encourage community engagement with the SMP process, there are strong links and relationships between this and community adaptation planning and engagement.

4.8 As understanding and awareness of potential coastal change has increased in recent years, so too has the number of local groups and initiatives (for example, coastal partnerships) that have formed to help understand and manage these impacts. These groups will be vital in creating or improving links with the community at risk. In 2007, Defra, the LGA's Special Interest Group on coastal issues and the Coastal Partnership Working Group, commissioned research to examine the benefits that partners gain from joint working in coastal partnerships. A report was published in July 2008¹⁹ exploring the barriers to setting up partnerships as well as providing examples of how to overcome these and providing some useful lessons.

Example of partnership working

The Suffolk Coast Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Initiative is aiming to develop with local communities and interested groups a Management and Investment Plan for the Alde and Ore. This will feed directly into the Shoreline Management Plan policy which currently has a "hold the line policy" for the frontages concerned, take account of the Environment Agency's flood risk management strategy for the Estuary and associated coastline and feed into spatial planning policies. The Initiative is a partnership of organisations committed to developing an integrated approach to the management of the Suffolk coast in its widest sense. It includes the East of England Development Agency, the Environment Agency, and GO-East. Natural England, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council

Joining up with wider community empowerment activity

4.9 Promoting and helping facilitate good empowerment practice within local government is at the heart of the Government's 2008 White paper on community empowerment, *Communities in Control: Real people, Real Power*. The Government supports the promotion and delivery of community empowerment working through the Government Offices along with the National Empowerment Partnership, the Regional Empowerment Partnerships and a network of 18 Empowering local authorities²⁰. The support provided by these networks is shaped in the light of local circumstances and there may be scope and opportunities for community adaptation planning and engagement to join up with these.

4.10 One of the most effective ways to engage local people in services and facilities in their community as promoted in *Real People, Real Power*, is participatory budgeting (PB). PB directly involves local people in making

¹⁹ The Financial Benefits to Working in Partnership at the Coast" (July 2008), available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/pdf/environment/iczm/coastal-partnership-report-july08.pdf>

²⁰ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityempowerment/whatweare/improvingempowermentpractice/>

decisions on the priorities and spending for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups' which are representatives of all parts of the community to discuss and vote on spending priorities as well as giving local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process.

4.11 Selected pathfinders may wish to explore applying such a process as part of their community adaptation planning and engagement, and consideration of options for using the coastal change fund. PB might provide a good method to involve the community in what adaptation activities are prioritised in an area. The Participatory Budgeting Unit, the Government's key delivery agency on PB, can provide advice on carrying out such exercises.²¹

Guidance on community adaptation planning and engagement

4.12 To support this consultation, we gathered evidence on how communities view the issues associated with adaptation in a number of locations, and on what communities may wish to see from any community adaptation planning and engagement activity. The findings are shown below, and provide some principles to consider in community adaptation planning and engagement:

- Engagement approaches should normally be locally agreed, with emphasis away from being dictated from a higher level.
- Adaptation thinking and practice should start where the community is currently at risk.
- 'Community' is defined and recognised as having both formal and informal constituencies which, at the very least, embrace community and faith groups, parish councils, clubs, associations, landowners, householders, employers and local businesses, service providers, and key equality groups who may or may not be organised.
- Locally driven adaptation planning processes need to recognise the importance of the 'journey' towards adaptation.

4.13 The evidence suggests the need to include the following considerations at an interpersonal and community level as part of the journey towards community adaptation planning and engagement: better understanding of changing risks and processes; making best use of human and natural inter-relationships; developing community resilience; reviewing, understanding and using local and scientific information and opinion; recognising landowner and community interests and abilities; and where possible supporting the organisational capacity, willingness and resources to undertake community adaptation planning and engagement.

4.14 We will shortly be publishing a 'working draft' of guidance being developed for the department by Scott-Wilson. This looks at how local authorities can involve communities in planning for coastal change. In particular, the guidance

²¹ See <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk/> for more information.

draws lessons from case studies provided by coastal communities around England and provides advice to local authorities and other partners as they think through what structures and processes they need to put in place or, where existing structure exist, join up with, to help them to work with the local community. And, as every community will be different, the Guidance does not suggest that only one approach should be used. Instead it presents a range of models and ideas that you may wish to consider.

4.15 Additionally, the guidance will be structured into a framework that will allow for future modification, as informed by best practice and lessons from the pathfinder programme. Our intention is that the Guidance will be continually revised as we learn more about managing change.

We would welcome your views on the forthcoming draft guidance, specifically:

- Is the draft guidance useful, have you any suggestions as to how it could be improved?
- What other conditions/policies/support do you need in place to facilitate community adaptation planning and engagement?
- Are there sufficient communication tools to support technical discussions, how could this be improved?
- How should the plethora of decisions that involve community adaptation planning, be made? Should there be local governance structures in place to support adaptation planning, or should this simply evolve without structure?

Creating Capacity for Change

4.16 Managing change within any structure or community poses challenges for us all. Experiences from other community change processes, for example within inner city urban areas teach us that community involvement enhances the effectiveness of regeneration programmes by:

- encouraging better decision making;
- fostering more effective programme delivery;
- helping to ensure that the benefits of regeneration programmes are sustained over the long term

Wider examples of community involvement in managing change

Many examples of community involvement over the past decade or so have seen

the emergence of local people in communities and parishes as ‘experts’ in their own right, not only in their own needs and aspirations, but also in the history, culture, needs and direction of their neighbourhoods. They bring therefore a unique perspective and a resource (e.g. time) to the table and particularly from the New Deal for Communities (NDC) and Neighbourhood Management programmes; they have been given control of significant budgets and taken responsible decisions.

4.17 We want to ensure that communities are closely engaged in any discussions about opportunities and options associated with adapting to coastal change. In order for the wide range of organisations and partners that will be participating and leading these processes to do this to the high standards that we expect, we need to recognise that:

- leading and being involved in community change initiatives is a skilled task and requires experience and support; and
- similarly, that leading or being involved in these initiatives also requires appropriate resources.

4.18 In order to deliver effective community adaptation planning and engagement, pathfinders may also therefore want to explore using the coastal change fund to provide relevant capacity building, training or engagement activities, potentially drawing on approaches to change management adopted elsewhere.

We ask for your views on:

- Are there other ways that we could support partners and organisations in increasing their capacity with change?

The spatial planning system’s role in responding to coastal change

4.19 Government is committed to managing the impact of coastal change in a sustainable manner, and this includes ensuring that spatial planning policies, at both the regional and local level²², shape sustainable communities that are resilient to the risks presented by coastal change. Coastal change, as exacerbated by climate change, has implications for development on the coast and is therefore a major consideration for spatial planning in shaping places that

²² These are currently set out in Regional Spatial Strategies (and the forthcoming integrated regional strategies) and Local Development Frameworks.

are resilient to climate change. Positive planning has an important role in helping communities to manage risk and adapt to an ever changing coastline.

How does the spatial planning system currently consider coastal risks?

4.20 Strong spatial planning policy to manage coastal flooding is already in place. The policy, contained in Planning Policy Statement 25, ensures that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk from all sources of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. Where new development is necessary in such areas, the policy aims to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall.

4.21 Currently, planning decisions in relation to coastal erosion risks are made with reference to Planning Policy Guidance 20 (PPG20). PPG 20 adopts a strongly precautionary approach, restricting any development in areas at risk of coastal erosion. Stakeholders have told us that this has resulted in a sub-optimal position whereby even appropriate development that would be beneficial to the sustainability of a community is unable to go ahead.

New planning policy on coastal change

4.22 The Government will shortly be consulting on new planning policy for coastal change together with supporting practice guidance. The policy will set the planning framework for the continuing economic and social viability of coastal communities in areas of coastal change. The policy aims to strike the right balance between economic prosperity and the need for further defence of the coastline and reduce the consequences of coastal change on communities. It will facilitate a more strategic risk-based approach to managing future physical changes to the coast, so that the long-term adaptation of communities can be planned whilst allowing necessary development that is appropriate and safe.

4.23 The consultation together with details of how to get involved will be available on CLG's website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/publications/consultations>. We welcome your comments and feedback on how the proposed new planning policy will support the policy framework described in this consultation.

5 Managing change

5.1 The community adaptation planning and engagement discussed in the previous section should enable communities to manage and adapt to the impacts of coastal change in a sustainable way. The aim of this should be that areas affected by coastal change are able to remain places that people want to live in and visit; so that adapting to coastal change and continuation of vibrant communities are able to go hand in hand.

5.2 All communities are defined by the range of people, businesses, infrastructure and assets (including both natural and heritage assets) which come together in a particular geographical place. Physical changes to a place, such as those resulting from coastal change, can impact across communities. Therefore, all parts of communities need to be engaged in the community adaptation planning and engagement described in the previous chapter, and considered in any resulting activity to manage change, including through spatial planning strategies.

5.3 This chapter considers what managing change could mean for local buildings and properties, businesses, community and local infrastructure, and the natural and historic environment. It gives some pointers and examples of practice which selected pathfinders may wish to explore. It also includes a number of questions which we would welcome views on in response to this consultation.

5.4 Whilst the chapter looks at each of these different aspects of a community in turn, there are important connections between all of them and they should not be considered in isolation of one another. For example, businesses that provide jobs to a local community and help stimulate the local economy may be dependent on certain local infrastructure being in place. A beachside cafe, providing local jobs and supporting tourism, may rely upon an access road and/or car park to enable suppliers and customers to reach it. Similarly, a local nature reserve or heritage asset may draw visitors to an area, in turn supporting local businesses. In the light of this, selected pathfinders will want to ensure that in planning for and managing change, all parts of the community are involved.

Regeneration

5.5 In planning for and managing change with and for the community, there are also potential connections to be made with wider regeneration activities. This is something that selected pathfinders may want to explore further.

5.6 In May 2009, the Government published Transforming Places, Changing Lives – Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework²³ which highlighted the role of local government in driving regeneration in the light of the particular needs of their communities.

5.7 The Regeneration Framework points out that regeneration activity at local and regional level should take account of both a changing climate and future climate risks and opportunities which could, for example, include planning for coastal change adaptation. This will help to maximise the future benefits of regeneration investment, with a priority focus on improving economic outcomes.

Coastal Communities Alliance: regeneration and coast

The Coastal Communities Alliance, an umbrella group representing over 40 coastal local authorities and organisations, has identified coastal regeneration as an issue on which it seeks to promote best practice amongst practitioners and to inform policy and funding decisions in coastal areas. The Alliance is currently working on a Coastal Regeneration Handbook to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all those organisations involved in coastal regeneration and the policy instruments and resources available to them. This Handbook will also offer examples of learning and best practice and a ‘toolkit’ to help those leading regeneration in coastal areas to deliver successful outcomes.

Local buildings and properties

5.8 The “permanent” nature of buildings makes them, and the people, businesses or services that they accommodate, particularly vulnerable to the risks of coastal change. As well as the threat of a building eventually being lost as a result of coastal erosion, the prospect of loss can have wider consequences for communities.

5.9 For example, in some situations, properties facing an erosion risk can become neglected. This in turn can have wider impacts on a community’s vitality, potentially contributing to blight and wider socio-economic problems. It is therefore important that buildings – including homes, community buildings etc - are part of the community adaptation planning and engagement discussed in the previous section.

5.10 Successful pathfinders may wish to explore different approaches to tackling the potential for neglect and thus avoid blight. These approaches should be focused on securing wider benefits to a community, although they may also in practice provide support to individual affected households or businesses. Authorities may wish to consider opportunities for intervention years prior to

²³ See

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/citiesandregions/transformingplacesframework>

expected loss of a building which, in the light of their adaptation planning and engagement with local communities, emerge as a more appropriate approach.

5.11 Possible approaches could range from simple maintenance and upkeep measures such as painting and decorating, to more complicated approaches such as 'buy and lease back'. This would involve a local authority purchasing a property that is expected to be totally lost to coastal erosion in a number of years at an agreed price. The local authority could then let the property: either back to the existing occupier, or to a new tenant, to recoup the investment.

5.12 The suitability of this type of approach would depend on a variety of local circumstances, markets and opportunities, which successful pathfinders would want to consider. It could though provide valuable opportunities in the short to medium term for businesses such as beach cafes or shops, or holiday homes, which in turn could enhance the visitor economy and create local employment opportunities. It also has potential to be a revenue neutral option for local authorities, and this is something that pathfinders could explore further.

5.13 Pathfinders may also want to consider approaches to facilitating relocation of facilities or businesses at risk, for example through their planning strategies, where this is an adaptation measure that has been identified through their community adaptation planning and engagement. The following section provides some more details on how facilitating rollback could help support local businesses in adapting.

We ask for your views:

- Are there other approaches to avoiding neglect of local buildings and properties to retain community vitality that pathfinders could explore?
- How best could pathfinders ensure that approaches to supporting local buildings and properties are designed to support the most vulnerable in adapting to coastal change?

Business

5.14 Local businesses and enterprises sustain our coastal communities, maintaining viable employment opportunities for local residents. Our aim is to ensure that businesses are able to adapt to coastal change; that they plan for it and are supported in identifying the new opportunities that it could bring them and their local community.

5.15 The coastline is home to businesses from a range of industry sectors such as marine, tourism, hospitality, agriculture and the wider rural economy. Close proximity to the coast is an integral part of many businesses, particularly in the tourism sector, and these may be particularly vulnerable to coastal change.

Examples include coastal caravan parks, other forms of holiday accommodation and beach facilities all of which can bring significant benefits to the local economy in some areas of the country, providing employment in their own right as well as enabling tourism and bringing wider benefits to other local businesses.

5.16 As well as putting business premises at risk, coastal change may damage local infrastructure such as roads, pathways, car parks and amenity land which businesses depend on for access and footfall. Also, in areas where coastal change is recognised as significant, there could be a slowdown in private investment, negatively impacting on long term growth prospects of local business.

5.17 Without considering business opportunities and risk in community adaptation planning and engagement, alongside local infrastructure (see below), there is the potential for coastal change to have a detrimental impact on a community's local economy and structures. This could contribute to deprivation in some coastal areas and underlines the importance of ensuring that businesses are both able to adapt and be involved in wider regeneration initiatives in coastal areas.

How can businesses adapt?

5.18 One option is for either permanent or temporary relocation. There are already examples of caravan sites at risk of coastal erosion rolling back from the coast. This approach has been adopted in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

East Riding has one of the fastest eroding coastlines in Northwest Europe. The average rate of erosion over the whole length is 1.8 metres per year, however, rates fluctuate enormously, both over time and from location to location, so accurate prediction is often difficult.

The concept of 'Rollback', in which businesses or dwellings physically move further inland away from the threat of coastal erosion, has been identified as a way to furthering sustainable coastal economic, environmental and social infrastructure development. On the East Riding coast, the rollback response is particularly relevant to the caravan and holiday park industry.

5.19 Many local authorities are already working with affected communities and other partners to manage and support sustainable relocation.

Meadow Cottage, a care home for adults with learning difficulties is located in an ageing Edwardian building in an at risk location on the clifftops at Overstrand, Norfolk. The charity which runs the facility approached North Norfolk District Council for early stage discussions regarding their unsuitable premises and the need to re-develop their facility, believing that permission may be refused due to

the high risk location of the plot. Whilst Council policy is seeking to constrain development in high risk locations, the Council was able to support the charity's decision making by offering advice with regard to suitable redevelopment of the site that would be acceptable despite the location. One of the considerations is that of a wooden built structure, which it would be possible to move at a future date: an appealing idea to both the charity and the Council. The Council is also urging the charity to consider wider options available to them through the Council's roll-back policy, such that green and brown field sites may now be suitable. The charity is now actively considering these options.

What support is currently available to business in areas facing coastal change?

5.20 Examples of support and advice available to businesses in areas at risk of coastal change include:

- Local authorities providing advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.
- Business Link providing advice on crisis management, business continuity planning and adapting a business to the effects of climate change as part of a broader free business advice and support service available on-line and through local advisors.
- The Environment Agency, local authorities and other agencies providing accurate and up-to date information to businesses on the risks they face from coastal change, to inform business planning and risk management.
- Business Link and local authorities signposting businesses to relevant guidance and advice produced by the Environment Agency.

5.21 Many coastal towns have and continue to benefit from regeneration schemes supported by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), local authorities and the private sector. There are also examples of local councils being highly supportive and flexible in planning processes to support re-location of businesses at risk of significant damage from coastal erosion. Local authorities and RDAs may decide to provide support to local businesses to relocate or retreat but are under no statutory obligation to do so.

5.22 Businesses also have the opportunity to comment on and contribute to local strategies such as the Local Development Framework, which help shape how a locality adapts to coastal change.

5.23 We are committed to maintaining sustainable communities and supporting local economies. Pathfinders could explore how to provide appropriate support to business in affected areas, recognising the wider value businesses provide to a local economy in terms of jobs, the visitor economy and wealth creation.

Ensuring that businesses have access to appropriate support and information on adapting to coastal change.

5.24 Local businesses, including those in coastal communities, already have access to support and information from a range of sources. These include local authorities, community groups, the Environment Agency, RDAs and Business Link. We are interested in views on whether this existing advice and support, including that relating to climate change and flooding risk, meets the needs of businesses in areas facing coastal change and how advice and support could be improved.

5.25 Successful pathfinders may wish to explore other approaches to supporting individual businesses in adapting, particularly in circumstances where there are opportunities to support wider sustainable community, employment and regeneration priorities. Existing funding streams for these activities could be supplemented by the coastal change fund. For example, support could be provided towards relocation of a business to new premises as part of a wider regeneration scheme for an area. In some circumstances, some types of business activity, such as those associated with tourism, could be encouraged in the area where this is appropriate for the degree of risk and likely lifetime of investment.

Ensuring that businesses are part of wider community adaptation planning and engagement.

5.26 Section 4 underlines the importance of community engagement in planning for coastal change. Given the role of local businesses in sustaining our coastal communities, it is important that they are part of this process and part of wider thinking on adaptation options and opportunities for a community. We would expect local businesses to be a key partner in planning for and managing change.

We ask for your views:

- Are you aware of any examples of existing sources of support and information enabling businesses to adapt to the risk of coastal change?
- What do you think the role of Business Link is in providing advice and guidance on managing coastal change risks to business?
- How might advice and support be improved?
- What do you think are the best ways of ensuring that local businesses are fully involved in community engagement?
- What incentives/support would enable local businesses to make use of

sites which are unsuitable for permanent development or use but where there are economic opportunities in the short to medium term?

Local and community infrastructure

5.27 Coastal communities, similar to any other community, rely on a variety of infrastructure assets to support and maintain them. Infrastructure covers a wide range of facilities and services from those provided nationally (such as motorways) and by local authorities (such as the local road network, or public services like car parks and public toilets); to those that are provided by private companies or other bodies (such as water supply, sewerage treatment, waste management facilities and power supply) and car parks or access provided by private landowners. Damage to, or loss of, infrastructure as a result of coastal change could have wider consequences such as reducing access, use or enjoyment of local assets. When planning new infrastructure, coastal change risks will need to be taken into account (see section 4 on planning).

5.28 The particular focus of this section is on local and community infrastructure which can be of pivotal importance to the viability and sustainability of a community and, therefore, needs to be part of the community adaptation planning and engagement described in section 4.

How do we currently support adaptation of community and local infrastructure

5.29 Whilst work on SMPs is ongoing, we do not have a national dataset explaining what type of infrastructure could be affected by coastal change in the future. We do however, have local information. For example, research in North Norfolk District Council²⁴ found that mainly beach access points, pathways, car parks and public toilets were likely to be affected by coastal change. Potential damage to local assets such as these can have a significant impact on the local economy.

5.30 Currently, assets such as these are managed locally, with local authorities working with the available information on risk to plan and manage them. As such, funds for these works are generally found within existing funding streams.

5.31 Local and community infrastructure can act like a glue holding communities together and making them viable places where people want to live and visit. We therefore think that consideration of local infrastructure needs to be part of the community adaptation planning and engagement described in chapter 4. As part of this, pathfinders may want to consider prioritising adaptation by including coastal change as a priority work area under their corporate Risk

²⁴ Available at http://north-norfolk.gov.uk/files/North_Norfolk_CMP_Evidence_Gathering_Study_-_Final_Report.pdf

Register, working with stakeholders, such as infrastructure providers, in order to inform this.

5.32 Pathfinders may also want to explore approaches to supporting adaptation of local infrastructure, potentially using the coastal change fund to supplement existing expenditure on local infrastructure where the focus is on adapting to coastal change.

5.33 Pathfinders may also want to explore opportunities for building partnerships with Local Resilience Forums and looking to these to lead work, through their existing networks, identifying whether there are any assets of national importance which could be impacted by coastal change. Where appropriate, management plans for these assets should be developed.

5.34 In relation to transport infrastructure, pathfinders may want to consider the Department for Transport's latest *Local Transport Planning Guidance*²⁵ which provides best practice for future planning, including the need to take adaptation into account in the way local authorities plan, invest, manage and deliver transport infrastructure. The Department for Transport has also produced *Maintaining Pavements in a Changing Climate* guidance²⁶. This will be incorporated into a section on climate change adaptation and road maintenance in the next revision of the Local Transport Planning 'Policies and Best Practice Handbook' which is due for publication this year.

We ask for your views on:

- How can local authorities prioritise supporting the adaptation of existing assets – are you able to construct business cases for this work?
- What advice/topics would be helpful to be covered in the next update to the Department for Transport's 'Policies and Best Practice Handbook' to help support you in transport planning?
- Do you have any examples of how best to do this, or ideas of new approaches that you want to share with colleagues?

²⁵ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/draftguidanceltp/>

²⁶ available from TSO, ISBN 978 0 11 552983, or from www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/liaison/climate_change.htm

Natural and historic environment

The natural environment

5.35 Although coastal change is a threat it is also an important part of what makes the coast special. The processes of erosion and accretion are essential to creating and maintaining the natural beauty and ecological value of the coast – which is so often also important for the local economy and identity. Without coastal change, our coast would lack the exposed cliff faces that provide such diverse ecological and geological features across the country. There would also be no accretion to maintain the beaches, dunes and other features that attract so many people and so much wildlife to the coast. Coastal landscapes and the wildlife they support form the basis of many economies both rural and urban. A well sustained coastal environment provides many benefits for local communities and for the country as a whole. The Government is committed to sustaining and enhancing the natural environment, and enabling access and appreciation of it for all.

How do we currently manage coastal natural environments?

5.36 All public bodies have responsibilities and duties to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings. Many private landowners also play a vital part in maintaining the quality of the natural environment at the coast. Natural England has an important role in advising government and other authorities on the management of the natural environment and access to the countryside particularly in areas that are designated for their special landscape or wildlife interest.

5.37 The spatial planning system and the network of designated sites, where strict controls apply to protect sites from damaging activities, together with the positive management by many individuals and organisations provides important protection and good management for the natural environment at the coast. However, coastal environments are dynamic and change is part of what makes them naturally rich and diverse both ecologically and geologically. Wildlife also needs the opportunity to adapt to the changing coast, so that it can continue to thrive alongside people in the face of change.

5.38 Natural England is working with others to develop ways of managing the coast that maintain and improve its ecological interest, amenity and landscape value while allowing for the inevitable and essential changes that coastal change brings. This includes ensuring that the Government's coastal access initiative is delivered in practical ways which allow the coastal access corridor to roll back as the coast erodes.

5.39 There are many examples of the natural environment being managed well to help support local communities, embracing the natural processes of coastal change and increasing the resilience of the environment to withstand change while still providing the “ecosystem services” that people enjoy. The National Trust, one of England major landowners, published a report last year²⁷ to share its experiences of managing coastal change.

5.40 Coastal change challenges more traditional preservationist ideas about conserving the natural environment. Whilst we have some experience of managing changes in nature, we must also ensure that we do not lose the less resilient aspects of the natural environment and communities that live within those environments. We see two big challenges:

- winning “hearts and minds” and widespread buy-in from local communities and landowners for changes to treasured landscapes in specific locations, and
- establishing processes that facilitate managed change from vulnerability to coastlines that are more resilient, in which local communities have trust and confidence.

5.41 These types of approaches could usefully be explored as part of the community adaptation planning and engagement described in chapter 4. Managing changing coastal environments is complex; whilst we have a good understanding of the natural processes that can occur, there needs to be better understanding of how to manage these environments with the support of local communities and how to identify and unlock associated potential benefits to communities. Successful pathfinders exploring these sorts of approaches with support from the Coastal Change Fund should be able to help improve our understanding and develop good practice in change management involving the natural environment.

We ask for your views:

- Do you have any examples of good practice which could be provide inspiration and guidance to others in dealing with the interface between the management of dynamic natural coastal environments and community wellbeing?
- How could we better involve the whole community in working with the natural processes of change on the coast so as to leave future generations with a more dynamic, resilient, thriving and beautiful natural environment?

²⁷ Available at http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-shifting_shores.pdf.

The Historic Environment

5.42 As an island nation with a strong maritime tradition, the historic environment of our shoreline is fundamental to our sense of national and community identity and to local distinctiveness and sense-of-place at the coast. This heritage includes many historic buildings, areas, landscapes and archaeological remains (heritage assets) that are unique to the coast. It is important in its own right, for what it tells us of our history, but it also delivers significant benefits for the local economy and for wider society. Many homes and community buildings at the coast are of historic interest and heritage helps to sustain tourism and support regeneration. The coastal change referred to in Section 2 is also a fundamental aspect of this historic inheritance, with some areas showing a long record of change which has shaped maritime lifestyles and coastal communities over many centuries.

How do we manage coastal heritage assets?

5.43 English Heritage has published guidance²⁸ on how the historic environment should be considered as part of the SMP process. This explains the process of assessing what heritage assets could be at risk, taking account of this evidence in the SMP process, and then agreeing relevant action plans once the policy has been determined. This work is being supported, at a national level, by work to survey heritage assets along the entire coast of England²⁹, which is planned for completion by 2013.

5.44 Although the designation system is important in planning and managing coastal change it does not mean that all designated heritage assets can be protected in the long term. Should the preferred coastal management policy lead to a potentially detrimental impact on a designated or non-designated heritage asset, the adaptation options include:

- exploring other ways to conserve the asset in situ (e.g. by making it more resilient to flooding);
- recording the asset to secure the evidence it represents before it is eroded or inundated, and publishing the advances in understanding this brings; and
- in exceptional circumstances, relocating the asset to a more sustainable location

²⁸ <http://www.helm.org.uk/coastalheritage>

²⁹ <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.18390>

Adaptation options for heritage assets

Conversion by the National Trust of a Grade II listed 17th century building, Dial House at Brancaster Staithe, Norfolk, to a new Millennium Activity Centre included unique preparations for coastal flooding. Instead of flood barriers, the entire ground floor has been designed to allow the building to flood without causing significant damage, for example by raising the height of its electrical services.

The scheduled medieval chapel at Blakeney, Norfolk, and its surroundings were excavated and recorded in 2003-5, in advance of the site's inevitable destruction by erosion following coastal change. The archaeological mitigation strategy, undertaken as a component of a coastal realignment scheme, represents a successful collaboration between English Heritage, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, the National Trust, Halcrow, and the Environment Agency. The intervention has provided new evidence for re-interpretation of the site, and the ground-plan of the building will remain visible to the public for its residual life.

5.45 The Government's forthcoming draft Planning Policy Statement: Planning for the Historic Environment will set out the principles that should be applied by decision makers in relation to heritage assets. In doing so it will highlight the importance of involving local communities in decisions on their heritage and emphasise the need for the implications of climate change to be taken into account. It is therefore important that the historic environment is considered in community adaptation planning and engagement, alongside the other areas described in this chapter.

Community involvement in adaptation options for heritage assets

We need to develop better approaches to involving the community in adaptation options for heritage assets but some examples of good practice can already be identified. A study commissioned by the Landmark Trust of the adaptation options for the iconic cliff-edge Clavell Tower in Dorset (the inspiration for P.D. James's novel, 'The Black Tower' and featured as the frontispiece for Thomas Hardy's "Wessex Poems") concluded that the only viable option was to relocate the tower 25m inland to ensure its survival from coastal erosion for at least the next 125 years. This study sought the views of local people and ensured strong community participation in the relocation project which was part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

5.46 Adaptation options may need to be managed through the terrestrial and marine spatial planning systems and changes to designated heritage assets may require separate consents or licences under the Ancient Monuments and

Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 or the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. The system of heritage designation helps to highlight the significance of heritage assets (in terms of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest) to ensure this is taken into account in the decision-making process and to allow the careful management of change, but designation does not mean that all assets are to be physically preserved in perpetuity. Equally, the absence of designation does not necessarily indicate lower significance, particularly in relation to archaeological remains with archaeological interest. Undesignated assets of significance equal to designated assets should be treated according to the same principles.

5.47 Whilst the framework for making decisions about whether to defend a heritage asset or not is becoming clearer as we understand the risks better and as evidence for the coastal heritage is improved by survey, there is still more to understand about how to manage heritage assets when there are at risk from coastal change.

5.48 For example, we need a greater understanding about which heritage assets could be most vulnerable to coastal change, and a decision-making process for deciding which assets should receive the significant investment which may be needed for recording or adaptation. This process needs to be guided by coastal risk mapping and by English Heritage's survey work.

5.49 Wherever practicable, local communities should be involved in decisions on local heritage assets, and this should be part of the community adaptation planning and engagement described in section 4. As well as including the historic environment in their adaptation planning, successful pathfinders may also wish to explore approaches to the adaptation of heritage assets in partnership with English Heritage and others. This could help inform revised coastal management guidance which English Heritage intends to consult on in 2010.

To shape the revision of the English Heritage guidance, we ask for your views on:

- As the threat to heritage assets is likely to outstrip resources for securing adaptation options or recording, investment in adaptation or recording will need to be carefully prioritised. How can we decide which heritage assets should be prioritised for investment?
- How can communities be involved in the decision making process?
- How do we ensure that we realise the public value of a heritage asset before it is damaged by coastal change?
- Do you have any new examples or ideas to be contained in the updated English Heritage guidance?

Summary of consultation questions

Coastal erosion assistance package

- Do you agree that it is appropriate for Government to make available public funds to local authorities to cover demolition costs for which private homeowners are currently liable?
- Is the homeowner assistance package set at the right level to strike the balance between individuals taking responsibility for their investment decisions, and ensuring that local authorities are able to provide practical assistance to homeowners who lose their home as a result of erosion? If not how could this be done?
- How should the payment mechanism for the demolition and moving assistance grant work? What evidence could be provided to Defra to support a claim for demolition and moving costs?
- Apart from the current plans to provide more information on coastal erosion risk through maps etc, what other ways could home buyers be informed about purchasing on areas of the coast at risk from coastal erosion and to factor this in to their purchase?

Community adaptation planning and engagement

- Is the draft guidance useful, have you any suggestions as to how it could be improved?
- What other conditions/policies/support do you need in place to facilitate community adaptation planning and engagement?
- Are there sufficient communication tools to support technical discussions, how could this be improved?
- How should the plethora of decisions that involve community adaptation planning, be made? Should there be local governance structures in place to support adaptation planning, or should this simply evolve without structure?

Local buildings and properties

- Are there other approaches to avoiding neglect of local buildings and properties to retain community vitality that pathfinders could explore?
- How best could pathfinders ensure that approaches to supporting local buildings and properties are designed to support the most vulnerable in adapting to coastal change?

Business

- Are you aware of any examples of existing sources of support and information enabling businesses to adapt to the risk of coastal change?

- What do you think the role of Business Link is in providing advice and guidance on managing coastal change risks to business?
- How might advice and support be improved?
- What do you think are the best ways of ensuring that local businesses are fully involved in community engagement?
- What incentives/support would enable local businesses to make use of sites which are unsuitable for permanent development or use but where there are economic opportunities in the short to medium term?

Local and Community Infrastructure

- How can local authorities prioritise supporting the adaptation of existing assets – are you able to construct business cases for this work?
- What advice/topics would be helpful to be covered in the next update to the Department for Transport's 'Policies and Best Practice Handbook' to help support you in transport planning?
- Do you have any examples of how best to do this, or ideas of new approaches that you want to share with colleagues?

The natural environment

- Do you have any examples of good practice which could be provide inspiration and guidance to others in dealing with the interface between the management of dynamic natural coastal environments and community wellbeing?
- How could we better involve the whole community in working with the natural processes of change on the coast so as to leave future generations with a more dynamic, resilient, thriving and beautiful natural environment?

The historic environment

- As the threat to heritage assets is likely to outstrip resources for securing adaptation options or recording, investment in adaptation or recording will need to be carefully prioritised. How can we decide which heritage assets should be prioritised for investment?
- How can communities be involved in the decision making process?
- How do we ensure that we realise the public value of a heritage asset before it is damaged by coastal change?
- Do you have any new examples or ideas to be contained in the updated English Heritage guidance?

How do I respond?

Responses to this consultation should be sent by 25th September 2009:

By email: coastal.change@defra.gsi.gov.uk

By post:
Coastal Erosion Team
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Area 2D, Ergon House, Horsferry Road, London. SW1P 2AL.

Confidentiality

In line with Defra's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of the responses we receive may be made publicly available through:

The Defra Information Resource Centre
Lower Ground Floor
Ergon House
Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 2AL

If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response will be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in email responses will not be treated as such a request. You should also be aware that there may be circumstances in which Defra will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations.

The Information Resource Centre will supply copies of consultation responses to personal callers or in response to telephone or email requests (tel: 020 7238 6575 email: defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk). Wherever possible, personal callers should give the library at least 24 hours notice of their requirements. An administrative charge will be made to cover photocopying and postage costs.

If you have any queries about this consultation you should contact Paul Barrett by email at coastal.change@defra.gsi.gov.uk or telephone on 020 7238 1236.

Complaints relating to this consultation should be sent to Marjorie Addo, Defra's consultation coordinator, Area 7B, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.

Government consultation guidelines can be found at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

Next Steps

Following this consultation, the Government will analyse the responses and draft a final version of the policy. The aim is to publish this revised policy in 2010.

Glossary

- **Accretion** – the gradual extension of land by natural forces, as in the addition of sand to a beach by ocean currents, or the extension of a floodplain through the deposition of sediments by repeated flooding.
- **Adaptation** - the process of becoming adjusted to new conditions, in a way that makes individuals, communities or systems better suited to their environment.
- **Coastal Change** – physical change to the shoreline, i.e. erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and coastal accretion.
- **Coastal Erosion** - a natural process that occurs as a result of waves, tides or currents – in other words, the sea – striking the shore. Sediment or rocks are washed away (but can be a sediment source for elsewhere), and our coastline changes shape as a result.
- **Coastal Flooding** - the inundation of land areas along the coast that is caused by sea waters over and above normal tidal action
- **Coastal slip** - downhill movement of unstable earth, clay, rock etc often following prolonged heavy rain or coastal erosion
- **Community** – defined by the range of people, businesses, services and assets (including both natural and historic assets) which come together in a particular geographical place
- **Demolition** - the removal of an unsafe property as set out in the 1985 Housing Act
- **ICZM** - Integrated Coastal Zone Management means adopting a joined-up approach towards the many different interests in coastal areas –both on the land and at sea. It is the process of harmonising the different policies and decision-making structures, and bringing together coastal stakeholders to take concerted action towards achieving common goals. Integrating the many different interest effectively means we can look at the coast in a holistic way.
- **LDF** – a Local Development Framework is a local planning strategy that all local authorities in England are required to produce under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- **LSP** - Local strategic partnerships exist in nearly all local authority areas in England and Wales. They bring together representatives from the local statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors to address local problems, allocate funding, discuss strategies and initiatives.
- **Pathfinder** – an approach used to test policy ideas and provide feedback.
- **Rollback** - in which assets physically move further inland away from the threat of coastal erosion.
- **Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs)** are high level documents which form an important element of the strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management, provide a long term vision for a sustainable coast where future decisions can be taken with confidence using the best available

- evidence and effective engagement with local communities. There are four main approaches to the management of coastal erosion:
- **Hold the existing defence line** by maintaining or changing the standard of protection. This policy should cover those situations where work or operations are carried out to improve or maintain the standard of protection provided by the existing defence line.
 - **Advance the existing defence line** by building new defences on the seaward side of the original defences. Using this policy should be limited to those policy units where significant land reclamation is considered.
 - **Managed realignment** moving the line of defence backwards or forwards, with management to control or limit movement (such as reducing erosion or building new defences on the landward side of the original defences).
 - **No active intervention**, where there is no investment in coastal defences or operations thus allowing natural define the position of the shoreline.
- **Spatial planning** – refers to the methods used to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, and to achieve social and economic objectives.