

Themes from Kent Coastal Conference

www.coastalkent.net

In February 2007 the Kent Coastal Network held the Kent Coastal Conference “Planning for a sustainable future”, sponsored by the Crown Estate, South East Coastal Group and Kent County Council. This bulletin supplement provides updates on all the major conference themes.

Thank you to all those who have provided updates on your work and for those of you who missed the conference, the original powerpoint presentations can be found at:

www.coastalkent.net/news.php?id=277

In 2008 we aim to run the conference on June 17th and would welcome any suggestions for topics or offers of talks. Please contact the Kent Coastal Officer, Chris Drake, at chris.drake@kent.gov.uk or on **01622 221266**.

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South East Coastal Project – Natural England

Alan Law, Director for Natural England in the South East, gave the key note address at the Kent Coastal Conference in 2007, outlining the future direction of Natural England in relation to coastal work. Since then, the South East Coastal Project has been launched; here is some background on the project.

The South East Coastal Project is a new Natural England project, aimed at taking forward their objectives for the coastal and marine areas in South East England. The project, running for two years from October 2007, will bring together existing and new work programmes and aim to achieve goals in a more integrated way.

Integral to this is the need to develop stronger and more productive partnerships with key organisations such as the Environment Agency, ports and fishing agencies and major landowners. Headed up by the region’s new Coastal Senior Specialist, the project will bring together and integrate the work of Natural England’s coastal staff across the region, identifying clear outcomes and better ways of working.

Here are the priorities for the project:-

- Improving the condition of coastal SSSI’s.
- Ensuring the natural environment is at the heart of strategic coastal planning processes such as Shoreline Management Plans and Coastal Strategies.
- Ensuring that development affecting the coastal and marine environment is sustainable, through effective engagement in development planning in key coastal sectors such as the ports, coastal defence and fishing industries.
- Taking significant steps towards the recovery and conservation of our marine environment through initiatives such as Marine Protected Areas.

For further details of the South East Coastal Project, contact Chris McMullon; chris.mcmullon@naturalengland.org.uk

Marine Bill Update - Defra

The Government’s vision for the marine environment is for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. To help deliver this vision Defra are preparing a Marine Bill. It will put in place a better system for delivering sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment. This will address both the use and protection of our marine resources.

The Marine Bill has received widespread support from non government organisations; here Steve Collins of Defra provides an update on Marine Bill developments over the last year.

A Marine Bill White Paper, ‘A Sea Change’ and associated partial Regulatory Impact Assessment document was published for consultation by Defra on 15 March 2007. The three-month consultation period ended on 8 June 2007. A total of 8519 responses were received. Of these, 8085 responses were via campaigns organised by environmental organisations (Marine Conservation Society, The Wildlife Trusts, The Wildlife and Countryside Link and Greenpeace), all of which are supportive of the proposals. A further 434 responses were received from individuals and organisations representing a wide variety of interests.

The Summary of Responses document, published on 17 October 2007, contains a summary and a brief analysis of the respondent’s comments to the consultation and associated partial Regulatory Impact Assessment.

The Summary of Responses document and the White Paper can be downloaded from the Defra website at: www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/marin ebill-whitepaper07/index.htm These responses are feeding into the further development of the Marine Bill.

In addition to the campaign responses 82% of non-campaign responses stated their support for the Bill. Many respondents, including a large number of standard responses, expressed a desire for the Bill to be laid before Parliament during the 2007-2008 Parliamentary session.

Many respondents commented on the geographic scope of the Bill and devolution. Respondents emphasised the need for a consistent and joined up approach across all the devolved administrations. Many standard responses from supporters of environmental organisations highlighted that if the proposals created differences either side of political or administrative boundaries then this would cause unnecessary complications or would hinder effective

management of the marine environment. They stressed the need for consistency across regional as well as national boundaries.

Comments on the licensing proposals were broadly supportive and welcomed regulating better initiatives. There was some concern about lack of detail, this will be addressed through secondary legislation and guidance. Questions were also asked about coordination with planning reforms.

Comments on the nature conservation proposals were generally supportive. However, some concerns were expressed on the detail of protected area site designation, use of socio-economic factors in site selection and the role of conservation agencies in site selection and monitoring/management.

Comments on the fisheries proposals were strongly supportive of modernisation of Sea Fisheries Committees. There was cautious support for a recreational sea angling licence but concerns about enforcement and impact. Many felt that any restrictions on anglers (e.g. bag limits) should also apply to commercial fishermen. There was support for proposals to strengthen enforcement powers, including those to tackle IUU fishing.

Respondents generally supported the overall aim of the marine planning proposals. All respondents felt strongly about the importance of ensuring integration between marine and land planning. The majority of respondents commenting on delivery of planning supported the proposal for the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to be the body that delivers marine planning. Again there were some questions about coordination with planning reform.

There was broad support for the creation of an MMO and its purpose. One pervading theme was that there should be strong joined-up/consistent approach between the MMO and its equivalents in the devolved administrations. There were some concerns regarding the interrelationship between an MMO and the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). A number of stakeholders felt all marine decisions should reside with the MMO, not the IPC. A number of respondents emphasised the need to ensure that the MMO was sufficiently resourced/funded to carry out its numerous tasks.

The Government intends to meet its 2005 manifesto commitment to introduce a Marine Bill in this Parliament and is

committed to publishing a draft Marine Bill as part of the legislative programme in this 2007/08 session of Parliament. We expect this will be in the spring of 2008.

Publishing the Bill in draft will allow time for full scrutiny of our detailed proposals, which should lead to a better Bill, and ensure that we get the legislation right.

The timetable for the introduction of a Marine Bill to, and passage through, Parliament will be subject to the outcome of this public scrutiny of the draft Bill and the availability of Parliamentary time. The latest edition of the Marine Bill Newsletter is available at:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/policy/marine-bill/index.htm

Integrated Coastal Zone Management Update - Defra

The coast is subject to different demands from environmental, economic and community sectors; these demands can often be in conflict, particularly in an area as busy as the Kent coast. Integrated Coastal Zone management aims to bring together sectors involved in the management and use of the coast and work towards the common objective of sustainable development. Steve Collins from Defra, brings us up to date on ICZM strategy.

The Summary of Responses to the Consultation 'Promoting an integrated approach to management of the coastal zone (ICZM) in England' was published in June 2007. A total of 93 responses were received. There were four recurring themes throughout the responses.



Consultees generally felt that government departments were not working effectively together to achieve common goals on the coast and that coastal policies are not effectively integrated. They also felt that there should be a single co-ordinating or advisory body for coastal issues.

A number of stakeholders called for a legislative framework and/or statutory ICZM which would require coastal managers and regulators to work more effectively together.

It was strongly felt that the relationship between existing planning systems in coastal areas and new proposals for marine plans should be thought through carefully. Respondents also sought clarity on the roles and responsibilities of different public bodies with responsibilities in these areas, and how decisions were being made.

Many respondents welcomed the recognition of the valuable contribution made by coastal partnerships towards the delivery of ICZM, but felt that they could achieve more with greater support from Government.

The full text of the Summary of Responses is available at: www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/water/marine/uk/iczm/index.htm

Following on from this and Marine Bill consultations, we are aiming to publish an action plan in 2008 that will detail how we intend to take ICZM forward. It will set out our objectives for achieving a framework that guides and supports strategic action at local and regional levels in England. This needs to be in the context of progress on wider strategy for the marine environment including the Review of Marine Nature Conservation and the development of the proposals for the Marine Bill. The exact timing of this will depend on the demands on resources from the Marine Bill.

ICZM – The European Commission Context

In 2002, the European Union adopted a Recommendation on implementing Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe, which asked Member States to undertake a national stocktaking of coastal legislation, institutions and stakeholders. Based on this information, Member States were also asked to develop national strategies to implement ICZM and report back to the European Commission by February 2006.

In an assessment of the effectiveness of the 'ICZM' Recommendation, the European Commission commissioned an evaluation on the progress of the implementation of ICZM across Europe. In June 2007 the Commission published a communication on their evaluation, declaring that improvements were being achieved across Europe, although in some cases slowly and it was concluded that no further actions or new legislation was needed at this stage.

The full text of the communication 'Report to the European Parliament and the Council: An evaluation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in

Europe' and the 'Evaluation of ICZM in Europe' are available on the European Commission's website at:
www.ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/home.htm#zone2

Coastal erosion and flood risk management – Environment Agency

At the Kent Coastal Conference in February 2007, Alison Baptiste of the Environment Agency posed the question of whether coastal erosion and flood risk management were changing. Plenty has occurred in the last twelve months and the answer appears to be yes; here Alison gives us an update on developments.

Over summer 2007, Defra announced a new strategic overview role on coast for the Environment Agency, there was a strong coastal surge event on the east coast and we experienced widespread flooding. All these reinforced the very positive answer that yes, coastal erosion and flood risk management are changing and both political and public expectation of how we manage them has heightened. So it is an exciting time to be working on the coast.

The new strategic overview role was announced on 22 June by the former minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Ian Pearson. The main changes mean that the Environment Agency will now:

- Take the lead for all sea flooding risk in England, and fund and oversee coastal erosion works undertaken by local authorities
- Ensure that proper and sustainable long-term Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are in place for the English coastline
- Work with local authorities to ensure that the resulting flood and coastal erosion works are properly planned, prioritised, procured, completed and maintained to get the maximum value for taxpayers money
- Ensure that third party defences are sustainable.

In addition to this

- The role and membership of Regional Flood Defence Committees will be widened to include coastal erosion. Local Authority Coastal Groups will continue as present but will become more streamlined and strategic.
- SMPs will remain as non-statutory documents. They will continue to be led by the body best placed to do so; however we will be responsible for managing the SMP programme



and approving the SMPs on behalf of the Minister.

- In April 2007 we started administering grant for sea flooding and from April 2008 we will administer grant funding for all flood and erosion risk on the English coast.

These changes will come into place on 1 April 2008, although the necessary legislative changes to support them will follow.

Behind this institutional change there is also change in the approach to how we manage the coast in a practical way. The Making Space for Water project Adaptation Toolkit has been looking at how we can adapt to changes in flood and coastal management practices. The aim of the project is to establish a 'toolkit' of measures to achieve sustainable management solutions and enable communities to adapt to longer term change.

The project has been working closely with two other Making Space for Water projects: the coastal erosion mapping project and the resistance and resilience projects. Coastal erosion maps will be produced by the end of 2008 and pilot projects are exploring how grants may assist communities to employ resistance or resilience measures to help themselves respond to the flood or erosion risk. The Adaptation Toolkit has investigated technical measures, planning and insurance measures and social/economic measures. The Minister was keen for a full consideration of measures, even those not considered before such as compensation. Government continues to see this work as vital to coastal management and the Treasury has recently agreed a £30m project for Defra to develop these adaptation measures over the next 3 years.

The coast defines us as an island nation, its landscapes are stunningly beautiful and many of us enjoy living, working and playing there. These changes will help those of us who work on the coast to maintain this national asset for future generations.

Renaissance of coastal towns - SEEDA

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), as the Regional Development Agency for the South East, is responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the South East of England - the driving force of the UK's economy. Here Anne Knight provides a review of the work SEEDA is doing with coastal towns in Kent.

SEEDA is already working in a number of key coastal towns to start bringing about the renaissance of the South East. Initiatives are already taking place with partners in key coastal areas in Kent including Ramsgate, Folkestone Margate Renewal and Dover Pride. For more information visit the SEEDA website at www.seeda.co.uk

The coastal South East is characterised by some of the country's cleanest beaches and major environmental assets such as the Downs and the Channel Coast. Coastal towns have their own distinctive character and history yet they are also areas of untapped economic potential.

If the coastal South East was to match the average economic performance of the UK, an estimated £13 billion in GVA would be added to the national economy each year. If this untapped economic potential is to be realised, a targeted coastal strategy is necessary. However, in order to address the diverse potentials and challenges facing the coastal South East, a variety of locally-driven approaches will be needed to achieve critical mass and local focus. These must address social and environmental frameworks as well as economic opportunities. The SE Coastal Strategy, due to be finalised by SEEDA in the new year, will focus on maximising economic potential and the differing opportunities presented by:

- Culture and leisure-based growth
- Skills-led growth
- Innovation and creativity-driven growth
- Economic upgrading
- Connectivity

SEEDA's priorities are to create cities and towns where people choose to live by investing in an urban renaissance,

redeveloping and regenerating key town centres to stimulate development of local economies; raise the quality of the offer to visitors and release the enterprise potential of the creative industries, leisure facilities and the visitor economy and expand the cultural offer; support enterprise and stimulate the creation of a wide variety of businesses.

The results will be a network of vibrant, attractive towns and cities, maintaining a diversity by playing to existing or latent strengths; a set of high quality destinations that secure the benefit of increased visitor spend for local communities and contribute to wider objectives for urban renaissance; and increased business start-up, survival and growth rates.

Thames Estuary 2100 online consultation – Environment Agency

As outlined by Kevin House at the Kent Coastal Conference, The Environment Agency is producing a Thames Estuary flood risk management plan for the rest of the century. TE2100 started in 2002 and will run until 2010; the project is currently seeking views on high level options for the estuary. The project area runs as far as the Isle of Grain and the current consultation will run until 17 March 2008. [Here the Environment Agency provides some back ground on TE2100.](#)

Where are we now?

Stage One, 2006: Early Conceptual Options (ECO) Consultation. We asked you about our objectives and how the measures to reduce flood risk could affect you or your environment. This consultation has finished. Stage Two, 2007-08: High Level Options (HLO) Consultation.

We now want your views on:

The future direction for flood risk management in the Thames Estuary. What needs to be done to achieve this direction in your local area. Your views from this current consultation will help develop the draft final plan due at the end of 2008.

Stage Three, 2009: Draft Plan Consultation.

We will ask you about the draft final plan following further assessment and appraisal.

Why are we seeking your views?

There are many ways to reduce flood risk so we want you to help identify the options with the least impact on people and the environment. We also want you to tell us about other benefits for

communities and the environment that could be achieved alongside our primary goal of reducing flood risk.

It won't be possible to satisfy all the varied and competing interests in the estuary and its floodplain, but by telling us what you think, we can produce a plan that includes, as far as possible, the needs and aspirations of everybody. Where opinions conflict with the objectives of the project or legal requirements, and we can't incorporate your views, we will explain why.

The policies

To put together an estuary-wide plan we need to consider how the Estuary behaves as a whole but also what is the best approach locally. We have divided the Estuary into 23 Policy Management Units (PMU) based on where the flood water would flow and the character of the local area. We have assessed each area and chosen our preferred future direction of flood management, this is what we call a policy. We have appraised the social, economic and environmental impact of these policies. We now need to understand how the policies would influence the work or long-term plans of your organisation and/or your relationship with the Thames Estuary and its floodplain. We also want to know how you or your organisation could help us put these policies into practice.

The options

The actions which are taken to implement the policies are known as options. Some options are in our control such as closing the Thames Barrier, but others will need to be carried out in partnership with others such as locating and designing new development. We have investigated a range of options which could manage and reduce flood risk throughout the century, based on four different climate change futures. We are beginning to appraise the social, environmental and economic impacts of these options. We now need to understand the implications of these options on you and your organisation. We can take this into account when we consider what action will be needed when and where to manage flood risk through the century.

How the policies and options manage the problem

The scale and nature of the flood management problem varies greatly across the Thames Estuary depending on: whether the area is already protected by walls or flood barriers; significant tributaries or freshwater flows into the Estuary; the lie of the land - high, low, urban, natural; and whether there are vulnerable communities

or assets like the underground system or local drainage network.

Based on local conditions, we have divided the Thames Estuary into 5 principal zones that require different options to deliver the local policies:

1. Options for West London recognise that defence levels are lower in places and freshwater inflows can be high. Although the Thames Barrier currently helps prevent freshwater as well as tidal flooding this may not be possible in the future. We must find other ways of managing the freshwater flooding.
2. Options for Central London reflect the high standard of tidal defence provided by the Thames Barrier and the tidal flood walls.
3. Options for straddling the Thames Barrier cover two important areas that straddle the Thames Barrier and are exposed to very different levels of flood risk. Upstream is protected by the barrier, whilst downstream has flood defences holding back an extra 2.5 to 3 metres of water.
4. Options for the Middle Estuary seek to identify opportunities and maximise the benefits of temporary tidal flood storage. Our modelling shows this area to be the best at reducing water levels.
5. Options for the Lower Estuary reflect the low-lying nature of this area and its current land use.

What we want from you

In 2006, you told us about our objectives and how the measures to reduce flood risk could affect you or your environment. 214 people registered an interest and 96 of these submitted responses. We would like to thank everyone for this. As far as was possible, your responses were included in the proposals we are consulting upon now. To see how we have taken your responses into account please contact the TE2100 team for a copy of our ECO Online Consultation report.

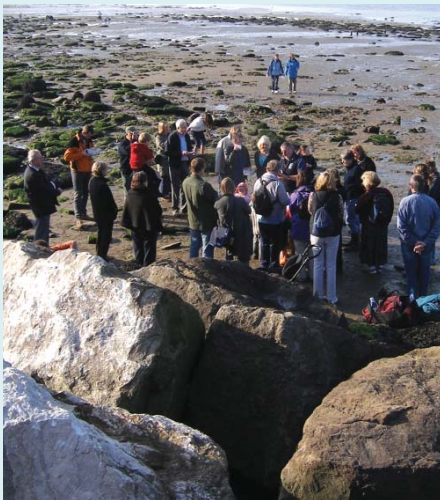
Now, at the high level options stage (HLO) we have moved on and we want you to tell us what you think about our preferred policy for the local areas, these set the strategic direction for flood management. We also want your views on the range of options that could achieve this policy, these are set against a range of different climate change futures.

The consultation is available online and runs until the 17th March to find out more background information and to take part in the consultation, register at: www.te2100.environment-agency.gov.uk/

Shoreline Management Plans

In the past, development of our busy coast took place with little knowledge of natural processes and the risks associated with development. We now have a difficult legacy to manage, with processes such as accretion and erosion being affected by the built coast and the additional problem of sea level rise and climate change.

Shoreline Management Plans (SMP's) provide a large-scale assessment of the 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.



In Kent, the SMP for South Foreland to Beachy Head has already been adopted. In 2007 two further SMP's, covering the remainder of the Kent coastline developed by the South East Coastal Group, underwent consultation. These plans are the Isle of Grain to South Foreland SMP and the Medway Estuary and Swale SMP.

The consultation documents divide the coast up into policy units and use a baseline of "No Active Intervention" to demonstrate the effect of not managing the coast. For each unit policies are suggested from hold the line to advance the line, to managed realignment or no active intervention. These policies present a range of management options for the next 100 years.

The public consultation on the two plans ran from May to September 2007. Press notices, releases and briefing packs were issued and the consultation documents were available on the South East Coastal Group website. Approximately 28 comments were received for the Medway Estuary and Swale SMP and 80 for the Isle of Grain to South Foreland SMP.

The indicated managed realignment extents were the subject of several

responses. One subject of concern was the loss of freshwater habitat as a result of managed realignment and the degree to which this could be compensated. Other concerns related to the loss of land to the sea and the associated assets such as footpaths and agricultural land. Managed realignment policies will therefore be subjected to further study to define the necessary extent of realignments before being implemented.

At the time of writing (January '08) the SMP's are due to go before the coastal Local Authorities for approval. If approved, the plans go to Defra to become future planning policy.

Action Plans have been produced for each SMP which include a range of short term actions (next twenty years), such as further studies to assist with the implementation of the different policies. These actions will be carried out by a range of parties including Environment Agency, Local Authorities, English Heritage and RSPB.

Further details of the Medway Estuary and Swale SMP and Isle of Grain to South Foreland SMP can be found on the South East Coastal Group website and updates and action plans will be added soon.

Visit: www.se-coastalgroup.org.uk

Coastal Monitoring Programme Update

During the Kent Coastal Conference, Nicola Smith of the Environment Agency gave us an overview of Coastal Monitoring in the South East.

The Channel Coastal Observatory is the data management centre for the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes (South East and South West of England) and the information gathered ranges from topographical, bathymetric, aerial, wave and tide and most recently, habitats.

This information is freely available from www.channelcoast.org This website informs coastal management from long term strategic planning to day to day beach management.

The South East Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme is managed on behalf of the Coastal Groups and is funded by DEFRA, in partnership with the maritime Local Authorities and the Environment Agency South East.

In 2007 the aerial survey for the South East was completed at the beginning of August. As in previous years, this was an extensive survey covering the entire coastline from Allhallows in Kent to Portland Bill in Dorset, including the harbours. All the digital images have now

been uploaded onto the Channel Coast website.

LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is an airborne remote sensing technique, which is used to gather millions of georeferenced XYZ points on a single survey. Surveys, typically flown at an elevation of 1000m, produce a swathe of data with a width of about 700m. This coverage is perfect for analysis of the coastal zone.

The LIDAR system, whilst operational for certain monitoring applications, has not yet reached the stage where confidence is sufficiently high to rely on it for beach monitoring at a strategic operational scale. It is perfect however, for applications that seek to provide an overview, where the absolute vertical accuracy is less significant.

Applications at a strategic planning level, for instance, allow assessment of relative water level changes over large areas and identify detailed relief of cliffs or saltmarsh systems.

LIDAR has the potential to supersede conventional photogrammetric methods at some stage in the future, but does not appear appropriate at this stage.

The potential benefits are considerable with significant cost savings compared to the current Annual Beach Monitoring Survey (ABMS) programme.

LIDAR flights for the South East region commenced at the end of October. Following a successful business case for additional funding, all the 'priority areas' identified will now be delivered this financial year. This is over 50% of the total survey area. The remaining polygons will be delivered by May 2008. LIDAR information can also be found at: www.channelcoast.org

Habitats information will soon be available from the Channel Coast Observatory too. An internal project is currently being set up to extract parts of the data into individual layers e.g. coastal biodiversity action plan (BAP) habitats. It is hoped that these will then be available via the programme's website. In the interim, if anyone requires access to the data, please contact Hannah Gribben: hannah.gribben@environment-agency.gov.uk

North East Kent European Marine Sites Update – Naomi Biggs, Thanet Coast Project

The North East Kent European Marine Sites (NEKEMS) included internationally important environmental sites between Whitstable and Deal. The original NEKEMS

Activity Subject Area	Priority Areas for Action
Shoreline Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Shoreline Management Plan on the local level Awareness raising of the impacts associated with unauthorised private cliff protection
Fishing and Harvesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into the impacts of shellfish harvesting on reefs Exploring the feasibility of introducing Lobster V-notching as a mechanism for management
Shore Based Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of Coastal Codes of Conduct into other areas covered by the management scheme (additional to Thanet) Motorbike, quad bike, go-kart and mini-moto management
Water Based Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing integrated water-based recreation management for Sandwich Bay, Pegwell Bay and the River Stour Research into the impacts of water based power craft on the chalk reef
Air Based Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of kite propelled activities
Research and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into the possible impacts from increased visitor usage in the area, in particular those associated with rockpooling
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Works at Foreness Point
Species Management and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring methods of control of non-native invasive species
Extraction of Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative management of fossil extraction

management scheme was published in 2001 and aimed at fostering better working relationships and engaging the community. It also created the highly successful Thanet Coast Project, here Naomi Biggs from the project, updates us on NEKEMS developments.

Last year's Kent Coastal Conference saw Ingrid Chudleigh, of Natural England and chair of the North East Kent European Marine Sites (NEKEMS) management group, present the experiences gained from the NEKEMS management scheme review. The presentation highlighted the

positives, the challenges and the many lessons learnt throughout the stakeholder dialogue process which was used to set up the original management scheme in 2001, and to review it in 2006.

Since the Kent Coastal Conference, the NEKEMS management scheme, covering 2007-2012, has been launched and is available to the public online at www.thanetcoast.org.uk The management scheme includes an action plan detailing specific actions which are intended to achieve effective management of the marine sites and surrounding areas. All

153 actions listed in the plan are a direct outcome from stakeholder discussions held during the series of three workshops in 2006. The priority actions are shown opposite.

As well as reviewing past and present management of the marine site, the workshops provided an opportunity to incorporate the set of wider 'ecosystem principles' into the scheme, and raised discussion on future climate change and sea level rise implications. It also identified new ideas and potential projects for discussion. Two new potential projects which came out of the discussions included a Natural Zone within the European marine site, and a Coastal Arts Project.

The concept of a Natural Zone is to minimise human impact on part of the intertidal reef, comparable to creating an intertidal no-take "Natural Zone". The benefits of the idea are to provide a refuge where wildlife can thrive undisturbed by many human activities – particularly extractive ones - and to provide a 'control' site that could help advance scientific understanding of how our coastal wildlife might develop. Steps have already started in scoping stakeholder support for the Natural Zone, during a meeting in October 2007. Issues raised by stakeholders included the challenges surrounding the proposal, such as what the size and location of the zone could be, the level of activity allowed, funding and how any new restrictions might be enforced. Another main concern was to ensure that further consultation does engage with the local community for support.

The possibility of developing a new Thanet Arts Project was widely supported by stakeholders at the workshops, with many expressing an interest in using the art as a way of providing greater interpretation of the importance of the wildlife and natural features of the area. Other benefits were thought to include fostering greater community ownership, increasing visitor numbers to the region and the provision of something 'exciting and colourful' around the coast.

The Action Plan has a strong monitoring component in recognition of the changing environment in the area. It also decentralises management down to the local level, sharing action points between the ten relevant authorities who sit on the NEKEMS management group. The majority of the action points, all due to be carried out over 5 years, fall under the Thanet Coast Project's responsibility; the main priority actions are listed in the table left:

Thanet Coast Project – Priorities for Action	
Proposed Outcomes	Priority Areas for Action
Trained Local coastal volunteers, or 'coastal champions'.	Involvement in looking after the local natural environment.
Raised public awareness and concern about coastal and marine wildlife.	Using green tourism. Linking to the coastscape and the arts.
Reduced unintentional harm to coastal wildlife and increased responsible use of the coast.	Working with local people. Working with interest groups.
Diverse community groups engaged in coastal awareness raising and action.	Create partnership links. Hold community events and activities.



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