



PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Topic: Impact of Coastal Erosion on Coastal Communities

Wednesday 11th January 2023 - 10:00-11:00

Chair: Sally-Ann Hart MP

Coastal Communities

Speakers:

Julie Foley OBE – Director of Flood Risk Strategy and
National Adaptation, Environment Agency

Angela Terry – CEO, One Home

Karen Thomas – Head, Coastal Partnership East and Officer
Lead for Coastal Adaptation, LGA Coastal SIG

HEADLINES & ACTIONS

- ◇ MPs heard from speakers providing national, local, personal and pressure group perspectives on the issue of coastal erosion and its impact on coastal communities.
- ◇ Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are currently non-statutory which is leading to issues around development and planning within coastal communities therefore a call was made to change policy and make these valuable resource statutory.
- ◇ A call was made again for a dedicated Minister for Coast.
- ◇ A call for energy investments to provide funding to coastal communities to support adaptation and transition of communities facing severe challenges as a result of climate change.
- ◇ Cross-departmental coastal task force needed to change the current single-sector approach to a multi-sector proactive approach.
- ◇ The Climate Change Committee Risk Assessment (2020) recommendations for a national adaptation framework and coastal viability assessment need to be delivered.
- ◇ A mechanism for energy companies to directly fund support for coastal communities impacted by climate change needs to be established.
- ◇ Future session on natural marine capital to provide an opportunity to support setback and rollback as currently no economic value given to sediments.

IN ATTENDANCE

Sally – Ann Hart MP – Chair
Peter Aldous MP Angie Fitch-Tillett
Helen Hill Maricel Williams
Researcher for Selaine Saxby MP
Researcher for Duncan Baker MP
John Beare MP KT
Duncan Baker MP AFT
Samantha Richardson Rachael Hill MBE

SECRETARIAT

Nicola Radford -Coastal Communities Alliance
/ Lincolnshire County Council
Beccy MacDonald-Lofts & Bethany Handson–
LGA Coastal SIG
Amy Pryor & Alice Watts– Coastal Partnership
Network

APOLOGIES

Apologies sent were noted.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE - Julie Foley OBE – Director of Flood Risk Strategy and National Adaptation, Environment Agency

- The coastline is undergoing constant and natural change but the severity and frequency of events impacting coastal communities is increasing as a result of climate change and sea level rise.
- The Environment Agency (EA) are providing a coastal strategic overview role and are working with local authorities, strengthening Shoreline Management Plans and looking at innovative solutions to the impact of climate change on coastal communities.
- £1.6 billion is being invested into our coastline including in habitat compensation and restoration.
- There is a need to keep improving evidence therefore the EA is investing in more data collection and updating the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Map with the latest data to give a clearer picture of future risk.
- Policy makers and coastal practitioners need to understand the risks associated with the coast and need the latest evidence.
- The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) refresh is underway and being led by Coastal Groups. This refresh will provide long term objectives and is reflecting the latest evidence. These plans will reflect the latest climate evidence and are there to inform planning.
- To complement the refresh there will be a new SMP Explorer tool that the EA are working to ensure is user friendly to a wider audience.
- SMP's are not currently easily accessible documents so it is essential that they are made more available and become living documents so that they support quick updates to keep them relevant and informative.

COMMUNITY INTEREST GROUP PERSPECTIVE - Angela Terry – CEO, One

- One Home's primary goal is to help people cut their carbon footprint and adapt to extreme weather events that are becoming much more frequent due to global warming.
- The most damaging is rising sea levels. Ice is melting faster, oceans are expanding and extreme storms produce larger, more powerful waves that pound our coast.
- The purposes of One Home's Shoreline Management Plan project are to raise awareness of the direct impacts on coastal communities of climate change and coastal erosion, and to encourage debate about the lack of support and resources available to those affected.
- Angela gave her observations of many homes and commercial properties being built or extended, where no active intervention policies were already in place.
- Expressed that people should know their risk due to coastal erosion so they can plan ahead to reduce the levels of harm.
- Shoreline management plans are not well known and not statutory.
- There is no compensation or insurance if you lose your home. Home owners have to pay for demolition and continue any mortgage repayment.
- Over a third of our shoreline is already designated as no active intervention.
- Over 100,000 properties are at risk from coastal erosion and 1.5 million properties at greater level of flood risk by 2080.
- Using publicly available datasets, One Home have created an interactive map online to highlight shoreline management policies and erosion risks to properties in England. Their map highlights the 21 communities with the highest number of properties at risk of coastal erosion by the end of the century.
- The erosion predictions were plotted assuming all planned shoreline management policies will be delivered, but in reality, due to costs, this is unlikely to be the case.
- Hard decisions need to be made and the reasons and consequences need to be communicated. Crucially those impacted need support and plans for the coast put in place to reduce harm.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS

- » Shoreline Management Plans should be made statutory,
- » Support needs to be put in place for those impacted by coastal erosion.

LOCAL PERSPECTIVE - Karen Thomas – Head, Coastal Partnership East and Officer Lead for Coastal Adaptation, LGA Coastal SIG

- The east coast is facing the highest erosion rates and the pace of change since the Beast from the East in 2018 is unprecedented.
- The combination of a largely undefended, soft cliff coast alongside this accelerated erosion and the potential for East Coast tidal surge this coast is the forefront of the impacts of climate and coastal change.
- Coastal communities have no options if they face erosion risk. There is no insurance, no financial package to support them and they could lose their home/business.
- Welcome the new national erosion risk map coming later in 2023 but it will highlight all the properties at risk as well as infrastructure and assets that support communities and coastal economies.
- Need to prepare to explain coastal risk to new audiences be able to respond.
- Coastal Partnerships East (CPE) have been successful in attracting funds for the 80km of coast they manage.
- Programme of work will explore new options with communities and businesses to support adaptation journeys. Aim to look at innovative approaches to funding and finance, planning policy and land use in the coastal zone, new engineering solutions and ground-breaking work on engagement to support a transition towards a more resilient coast for the future.
- Defra and the EA have provided new policy and strategy tools and funding and resource to accelerate coastal adaptation work.
- The current single-sector lens approach however is not working.
- Need integrated approaches that are cross-sector and therefore cross-government.
- With evidence gathered from coastal practitioners and members from the LGA Coastal SIG and Coastal Group Network in parallel to the EA Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme local councils need cross-government support – notably with owners of infrastructure and large 3rd party assets to allow them to deliver on the Climate Change Committee Risk Assessment recommendations (2020) for a national adaptation framework and a coastal viability assessment.
- Now at our last opportunity to really shift gear on coastal adaptation and get our 'house in order' across all sectors and government departments so we can bring all the policy and strategy architecture into one central place to really focus on the coast.
- People rely on our coast for recreation, tourism and well-being, most of our energy supply and telecommunication and internet needs are coming through our coast to your homes but much of this is at high risk to coastal change.
- Whether you live at the coast or not, you receive benefits from it.
- Now is the time we all look at our coast as a whole and take this opportunity to plan for and deliver a viable coast for our national economy, environment and society- our coast matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS

- » Cross-sector approach is needed including cross-governmental departments.
- » The Climate Change Committee Risk Assessment (2020) recommendations for a national adaptation framework and coastal viability assessment need to be delivered.

A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE - Lucy Ansbro clip from Coastal Partnership East film

- A short film on the perspective of an individual, in this case Lucy Ansbro, on the impact that coastal erosion has had on her personally and on her property.
- Lucy lost a significant part of her garden and feared for her property.
- Remedial works have been carried out to protect what is left of her property.
- The film can be viewed on the [LGA Coastal SIG's Coastal Adaption webpage](#).

DISCUSSION - main points

- Coastal erosion does not gain the same coverage that coastal flooding does within Westminster.
- There are many support mechanisms for those impacted by flooding but these are not replicated for those affected by coastal erosion.
- A coastal task-force is needed to cross departments and have a more even and joined up approach.
- Need to raise the public awareness of the issue of coastal erosion so that it is as highly seen as flooding and this includes within senior decision makers.
- Minister Pow is the Minister responsible for flood and erosion however is often referred to as the Minister for Flood which in itself reduces the visibility of erosion.
- There is accelerated approach for green energy yet these developments are not directly supporting the communities who are impacted by the effects of climate change.
- Local authorities want to move from a reactive approach to a more proactive strategy within the next 5 years. However climate change is not predicatable and some coastal changes have taken all by surprise.
- A proactive strategy needs coordination between governmental departments.
- Costs associated with maintaining the coast are rising.
- Increased storminess depletes beaches which will recover slowly over time but not to the height prior to the storm event. Responsible authorities then need to intervene which has substantial costs.
- The potential of natural habitats and Nature-based solutions need to be considered.
- There needs to be a mechanism to support energy companies in funding communities impacted by climate change.
- There is a need to reform planning policy for coastal communities including the making of SMPs into a statutory requirement.
- A mechanism to understand the value of Nature-based Solutions to tourism, defence, biodiversity and wellbeing needs to be established. This would support roll-back on the coast.
- The lack of compensation mechanisms for those impacted by erosion needs to be addressed, especially in the light of such mechanisms being made available for those impacted by flooding.
- A cross-border approach is needed as there are currently four different sets of planning policy, however the coastal change mechanisms do not abide by borders. There is potential for learning and effective working through a holistic and collaborative approach to this issue.
- Link to Scotland's [National Planning Framework 4 \(2022\)](#) - Policy 10, page 51 provided to show Coastal Development Policy Principles.