

Estuary & Coastal Flood Management

The EA (Environment Agency) in its responsibility to Defra (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) for flood defences, is required to develop projects which assess the state of existing flood defences and the future requirements for such defences based on 20, 50 and 100 year predictions of sea level rise, erosion and flood risk. They are then to devise flood strategies which take account of all factors; technical, economic, environmental and social, with consultation to take into consideration local issues and needs. This consultation is to be with Local Communities and Representative Bodies, (such as the RYA)

Each project is constrained by the following guideline objectives:-

- Reduce the risks to people and to the developed and natural environments from flooding and coastal erosion;
- Identify solutions that are technically sound and most fit for their purpose;
- Be environmentally acceptable and sustainable;
- Ensure best value for money from a **National** perspective.

Funding for each selected project proposal must be sought from Defra and meet their criteria for central funding. There is no **guarantee** that a project will receive such funding.

Flood Management Strategies

For each strategy plans must be developed for the coastal or estuarine system based on the following policy options:-

- No Active Intervention let nature take its course overtopping or breaching sea walls and widening estuary mouths. (NAI) (Do nothing!)
- Hold the Line by maintaining, and if necessary raising and strengthening existing sea walls to meet the expected rise in sea levels from global warming. (HTL)
- Managed Realignment by maintaining some walls in vital areas but allowing others to decay or be breached so allowing flooding to relieve pressure on other defences. (MR)
- Advance the Line by reclaiming more land and extending sea walls. (ATL)

There is already strong pressure for all users of the estuaries to compromise on their objectives and in our case to accept some restriction of our freedom of navigation.

Although many of us would prefer to adopt a policy of 'no change' this is not realistic in the face of global changes and because we cannot necessarily command a large enough portion of the **National** financial cake to fund such a policy.

It is therefore vital that we are involved as much as possible in the development of the strategy plans for our coasts and for each and every one of our estuaries.

The draft plans are put out to stakeholder consultation where local knowledge can be input, and we have been and are still involved in these consultations.