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SID 5 Research Project Final Report

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Executive Summary

7. The executive summary must not exceed 2 sides in total of A4 and should be understandable to the intelligent non-scientist. It should cover the main objectives, methods and findings of the research, together with any other significant events and options for new work.

This is the executive summary of the final report for the Defra funded project:

“Understanding the processes for community adaptation planning and engagement”

Scott Wilson (with Collingwood Environmental Planning and Lindsey Colbourne Associates) were commissioned by Defra in January 2009 to provide:

A policy report on the barriers and opportunities for Community Adaptation Planning and Engagement (CAPE) on the coast (this report); and

A Guidance document on how to get started on CAPE (in a separate volume¹).

The policy report and Guidance aimed to provide support and accompany Defra's draft Coastal Change Policy². This new policy is a recognition that coastal communities need more support from public agencies to understand and adapt to coastal change³. The Coastal Change Policy was published as a draft for consultation in June 2009. It set out ideas for how coastal communities can adapt to the impacts of coastal change and Defra's role in supporting this.

The research project aimed to identify the key gaps, barriers and synergies that affect community engagement in adaptation planning for coastal change. The project was a response to the concern that participation in debates about adaptation and the best solutions for different communities has not been happening, or at least not effectively or consistently, at the local level. There is a need to better involve communities in adaptation planning to help move towards greater consensus and manage divergent opinion where consensus proves difficult. Evidence from urban regeneration suggests that involved and empowered communities and groups are also more mature and able to live with decisions where they understand the issues, risks and process and feel they have had their say.

The project produced a definition of community engagement in the context of coastal adaptation (CAPE):

“CAPE is a long term, community centred planning process which aims to involve those most affected by the risks and opportunities presented by coastal change in order to develop understanding, forward thinking, practical and sustainable solutions for coastal communities and places”.

The research was undertaken through desk reviews, stakeholder interviews, five case studies with coastal communities, a national stakeholder workshop, plus the feedback and comments obtained during the consultation on Defra's Coastal Change policy. These tasks have informed the development of the CAPE Guidance (published as a separate volume) which is the main output of this project. The key findings revolved around the significant communications and engagement gaps relating to current approaches; lack of awareness of the problem or starting point; and how to structure and integrate adaptation planning in the context of the many other coastal management and planning activities.

Our study focussed mainly on the barriers to community adaptation planning and engagement on the coast. Therefore, the negative experiences of communities may be overrepresented in our findings. It should also be noted, particularly in relation with the Environment Agency, that they have acknowledged that community engagement has been an issue in the past and they are working to address it. For instance, the Building Trust with Communities (BTwC) tool was developed in response to previous negative experiences of working with communities (see the Shaldon case study in Appendix 6). In addition, the Environment Agency has recently appointed coastal engagement officers to improve community engagement practices in relation to new coastal erosion maps, SMPs and other coastal issues.

The key findings of our study are:

Current approaches to community engagement on the coast:

- Our study found evidence that coastal communities do not feel they are being meaningfully involved in decision-making, which can lead to distrust;
- Coastal communities feel that the main barrier for increased community involvement in planning and implementing adaptation measures is the current top-down decision-making structure;
- A key issue is the current lack of trust in authorities (particularly national agencies and central Government);

¹ Woodin, S, Fernández-Bilbao, A, Richardson, J, Zsomboky, M, Bose, M, Orr, P, Twigger-Ross, C, Colbourne L (2009) Guidance for Community Adaptation Planning and Engagement (CAPE) on the coast

² The Draft Coastal Change Policy is available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coastal-change/index.htm> (accessed: 30 October 2009).

³ Coastal change is defined in Defra's Draft Coastal Change Policy as 'physical change to the shoreline, i.e. erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and coastal accretion.'

- Consultation is seen as a 'rubber-stamping' exercise. Communities feel nothing ever comes out of consultation even though they are 'consulted to death';
- Skills and resources issues. For engagement to be adequately planned and carried out a wide range of competencies are needed; and
- More use of independent facilitators and brokers has been highlighted throughout the research. This would help to bridge the lack of trust in authorities and also the lack of engagement skills.

Current awareness of climate change, coastal change and the need to adapt

- Both across and within communities there is a range of levels of awareness of coastal and climate change issues which results in a number of different engagement situations and needs;
- For engagement to be meaningful communities have to be involved in defining the problem and deciding on the options;
- Communities are at very different stages in terms of engagement and awareness of coastal change - the need to 'adapt' or 'change' is not well understood at the local level; and
- People are more likely to adapt if they have the awareness, knowledge, skills and experience to engage with the technical aspects of adaptation measures.

Who should lead in adaptation planning

- There are a large number of planning processes and strategies that affect the coast and various organisations with responsibilities. This complexity causes confusion in communities;
- The large number of organisations involved means that there is also a lack of leadership on coastal issues. In terms of who should be the lead in adaptation planning, there seems to be a consensus that local authorities should fulfil this role. This raises a further issue, outside the remit of this project, as to whether local authorities have sufficient resources and skills;
- Resourcing CAPE may be particularly challenging for smaller rural local authorities or for those that may only have a small stretch of coast; and
- There seems to be widespread agreement that existing structures and groups should be used to implement CAPE (rather than creating new governance structures or groups).

Project Report to Defra

8. As a guide this report should be no longer than 20 sides of A4. This report is to provide Defra with details of the outputs of the research project for internal purposes; to meet the terms of the contract; and to allow Defra to publish details of the outputs to meet Environmental Information Regulation or Freedom of Information obligations. This short report to Defra does not preclude contractors from also seeking to publish a full, formal scientific report/paper in an appropriate scientific or other journal/publication. Indeed, Defra actively encourages such publications as part of the contract terms. The report to Defra should include:
 - the scientific objectives as set out in the contract;
 - the extent to which the objectives set out in the contract have been met;
 - details of methods used and the results obtained, including statistical analysis (if appropriate);
 - a discussion of the results and their reliability;
 - the main implications of the findings;
 - possible future work; and
 - any action resulting from the research (e.g. IP, Knowledge Transfer).

1. Introduction

1.1 This report

This is the final report for the Defra funded project:

“Understanding the processes for community adaptation planning and engagement on the coast”

This report updates an internal interim report submitted and presented to Defra and the project Steering Group in April 2009. This report also reflects the findings of the research conducted following the issue of the interim report as well as the comments received from Defra and the project Steering Group.

The remainder of this section sets out the background to this project and to the issues that some coastal communities face. Section 2 sets out our approach and methodology and the findings of our research have been included in Section 3. Additional background, case studies and other information has been included in the Appendices.

1.2 Background to the project

Scott Wilson (with Collingwood Environmental Planning and Lindsey Colbourne Associates) were commissioned by Defra in January 2009 to provide:

A policy report on the barriers and opportunities for Community Adaptation Planning and Engagement (CAPE) on the coast (this report); and
A Guidance document on how to get started on CAPE (in a separate volume⁴).

The policy report and Guidance were aimed to provide support and accompany Defra’s draft Coastal Change Policy⁵. This new policy is a recognition that coastal communities need more support from public agencies to understand and adapt to coastal change⁶. The Coastal Change Policy was published as a draft for consultation in June 2009. It set out ideas for how coastal communities can adapt to the impacts of coastal change and Defra’s role in supporting this. The policy was launched in parallel with a new Coastal Change Pathfinders competition for local authorities to explore different approaches to adaptation in coastal communities facing coastal change. The programme will run from Autumn 2009 to Spring 2011 and should provide an opportunity to learn more about how adaptation planning can work in practice.

⁴ Woodin, S, Fernández-Bilbao, A, Richardson, J, Zsomboky, M, Bose, M, Orr, P, Twigger-Ross, C, Colbourne L (2009) Guidance for Community Adaptation Planning and Engagement (CAPE) on the coast

⁵ The Draft Coastal Change Policy is available at:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coastal-change/index.htm> (accessed: 30 October 2009).

⁶ Coastal change is defined in Defra’s Draft Coastal Change Policy as ‘physical change to the shoreline, i.e. erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and coastal accretion.’

The key aim was to identify the key gaps, barriers and synergies that affect community engagement on coastal change issues. The project was a response to the growing concern that participation in debates about adaptation and the best solutions for different communities is not currently happening at the local level. There is a need to better involve communities in adaptation planning to encourage consensus and manage divergent opinion where consensus proves difficult. Evidence from urban regeneration suggests that involved and empowered communities and groups are also more mature and able to live with decisions where they understand the issues, risks and process and feel they have had their say.

A recent report⁷ on the social impacts of climate change in the UK highlighted that there are three types of strategic climate change adaptation responses: (i) policy, (ii) management and operational and (iii) community-led adaptation. The report goes on to conclude that 'action is needed at 3 levels within the UK: nationally and regionally (e.g. by government, agencies, regional bodies, etc.), locally (including by local authorities) and, most importantly, by and with communities' (our emphasis).

1.3 Background to coastal areas

Currently, there is not an up-to-date official definition of what is meant by 'coastal area'⁸. However, although likely to be replaced, PPG20 provides the following definition for local planning authorities to define the coastal zone in their areas:

"It could include areas affected by off-shore and near-shore natural processes, such as areas of potential tidal flooding and erosion; enclosed tidal waters, such as estuaries and surrounding areas of land; and areas which are directly visible from the coast. The inland limit of the zone will depend on the extent of direct maritime influences and coast-related activities. In some places, the coastal zone may be relatively narrow, such as where there are cliffs. Elsewhere, particularly where there are substantial areas of low-lying land and inter-tidal areas, it will be much wider."

The coast is at the forefront of a number of important challenges and opportunities including:

Climate change impacts, which are likely to be felt at the coast before they impact elsewhere, through increases in the frequency and seriousness of flooding compounded by increasing coastal erosion and land instability;

Socio-economic pressures from activities such as tourism, port infrastructure, residential development and more recently for environmental mitigation schemes, managed realignment and compensatory habitats;

The changing pattern of the use of the marine environment which includes an expansion of the offshore energy sector⁹ and the extension of the principles of spatial planning to the marine environment;

The need to protect important habitats and statutory designated sites; and

Pockets of deprivation, ageing communities, regeneration and investment needs.

Coastal processes are complex and depend on climate, tidal flows, sediment movement, water levels and man-made interventions. The 'science' of climate change is also highly complex and therefore there could be a tendency to assume that the public cannot understand complex issues. However, there is a wealth of evidence on the capacity of lay people to understand and

⁷ CAG Consultants (2009) The differential social impacts of climate change in the UK. Final Report to Sniffer.

⁸ CLG are consulting on replacing for Planning Policy Guidance PPG20 with a Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on coastal change.

⁹ Fletcher, S and Potts, J (2008) 'Coastal and marine governance in the UK: Editorial' The Geographical Journal, 174 (4), p.295-298.

engage with complex technical issues¹⁰. Also there is evidence of the detailed local and lay knowledge that members of the public bring to areas traditionally defined as “expert” and “scientific”, with recent work considering how expertise can be “opened up” so that different types of knowledge are viewed as resources rather than as burdens¹¹.

Climate change will bring significant impacts to coastal areas due to sea level rise and an increase in storm intensity and wave height. Similarly, in terms of coastal erosion the areas of uncertainty ‘relate more to the timescale of evolution rather than the underlying process of erosion’¹². But for engagement to happen, this will need to be in a form that the public and communities can understand and relate to.

1.4 Some key facts about coastal communities

Coastal communities have been highlighted as being among the least well understood of Britain’s localities. While considerable research and policy attention has been paid to rural and urban areas and to declining industrial areas, the coast has received comparatively little attention¹³. As well as ageing populations, some coastal areas are characterised by having fragile economic conditions including low incomes, seasonal employment and pressure on services during the summer months. Coastal areas also experience high levels of youth out-migration. For instance, the Lincolnshire Coastal Action Zone (CAZ) reports that in East Lindsey for every two people aged 18-24 that move out of the area, three people aged over 60 move in¹⁴.

The UK population as a whole is ageing and this trend is particularly evident along Britain’s coasts which have been traditionally popular retirement destinations. Rural areas along the coast experienced an increase in the proportion of their population aged over 65 between 1981 and 2001. In addition, coastal districts away from the main urban centres have disproportionate numbers of retired people¹⁵.

Some coastal resorts are said to suffer from the worse aspects of both urban and rural deprivation. Deprivation is particularly severe in the most isolated coastal resorts. Even larger and more prosperous resorts such as Bournemouth, Brighton and Skegness contain pockets of deprivation¹⁶.

Existing deprivation of coastal resorts is caused by a combination of coastal demography (with high proportion of retirees and benefits claimants), housing tenure, low wages, transitory

¹⁰ Gavelin, K and Wilson, R “Democratic Technologies? The final report of the Nanotechnology Engagement Group”. Involve 2007.

¹¹ See Stilgoe, J Irwin, A, Jones, (2006) The Received Wisdom: Opening Up Expert Advice (Demos).

¹² Scarborough Borough Council in partnership with the Isle of Wight Centre for Coastal Environment (IWCCE) (2006) Coastal Study Area Report: North Yorkshire Coast of England. LIFE Environment Project 2003 – 2006 ‘RESPONSE’: LIFE 03 ENV/UK/000611.

¹³ Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle upon Tyne (2006) Ageing and coastal communities. Final report to the Coastal Action Zone. Available: http://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/library/research_papers/Ageing_Communities_Report.pdf (accessed: 17 November 2009).

¹⁴ Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle upon Tyne (2006) Ageing and coastal communities. Final report to the Coastal Action Zone. Available: http://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/library/research_papers/Ageing_Communities_Report.pdf (accessed: 7 November 2009).

¹⁵ Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle upon Tyne (2006) Ageing and coastal communities. Final report to the Coastal Action Zone. Available: http://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/library/research_papers/Ageing_Communities_Report.pdf (accessed: 3 April 2009).

¹⁶ Lincolnshire Research Observatory (n.d.) Statistics – The Condition of the Coast (Available: <http://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/library/strategy.pdf> Accessed: 7 November 2009).

populations and narrow economic activities. In every domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, coastal areas are found to be more deprived than rural areas¹⁷.

An example of one such resort is one of our case study locations, Mablethorpe, which combines disproportionately high deprivation, elderly population (57% are over 55), seasonal economy, lack of services and infrastructure and lack of public transport, in particular a train station.

However, despite all these issues, people still want to live on the coast. This attraction is particularly prevalent among retirees who may have spent their holidays on the coast when they were young. Another example cited in an interview with East Lindsey District Council is that of the 5,000 households that the council has on its housing waiting list, the great majority want to live on the coast.

Coastal areas have also been a focus for regeneration funding. Since 1997, the Government has invested more than £20bn through initiatives like the New Deal for Communities, which supports 10-year regeneration strategies in 39 of the poorest neighbourhoods in the country and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, which has focused on the 88 (more recently 86) most deprived local authority neighbourhoods, 21 of which are on the coast. Councils in coastal towns, along with other communities in England, have also benefited from an increase in Government grant for local services of 39% in real terms since 1997¹⁸.

Coastal areas are rich in habitats, biodiversity and protected areas including sites of European importance and Ramsar Sites. Climate change, sea level rise and coastal management may negatively affect habitats in the coast. On some low-lying coasts, rising sea levels and an increase in storminess are leading to substantial losses of intertidal habitats as a result of 'coastal squeeze' (the process by which salt marshes and mudflats are eroded away as they become trapped between rising sea-levels and fixed seawalls). These losses also affect the management and cost of flood defences, many of which rely on salt marshes to reduce wave energy¹⁹.

Coastal issues such as the risk of flooding and erosion also affect historical assets and heritage sites on the coast. In addition, 33% (1,057 km) of the English coastline is conserved as Heritage Coasts. Most of the designated coasts are within the boundaries of National Parks or AONBs, although a small number stand alone²⁰.

Key coastal management issues

Coastal management issues include both coastal flooding of low-lying coastlands and estuaries and loss of coastal land due to erosion. The Foresight Future Flooding report highlighted that in terms of potential magnitude of harm, coastal flooding is far more significant. However, both processes are intimately linked. Very large scale movements of sediments on beaches, the

¹⁷ Lincolnshire Research Observatory (n.d.) Statistics – The Condition of the Coast (Available: <http://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/library/strategy.pdf> Accessed: 7 November 2009).

¹⁸ The Government's Response to CLG and LGC Report on Coastal Towns, Available: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm71/7126/7126.pdf> (accessed: 7 November 2009).

¹⁹ South East Coastal Group (n.d.) Providing Coastal Defence and Preserving Natural Habitats, Available: <http://www.se-coastalgroup.org/main.cfm?objectid=84> (accessed: 7 November 2009).

²⁰ Natural England (n.d.) Heritage Coasts, Available: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/heritagecoasts/default.aspx> (accessed: 7 November 2009).

shore and the sea bed have a key role in coastal dynamics²¹. Coastal erosion is estimated to be occurring along 30% of England's coastline²².

Currently, 46% of England's coastline is protected by hard defences²³. Coastal defences protect properties, agricultural land, business and other assets from flooding and erosion and have allowed development and economic activities to take place in areas at risk. However, coastal defence works have highly disrupted natural movements caused by tides, surges and the wind, particularly during the last century. In particular, the key activities that have caused disruption of natural processes include:

The artificial protection of eroding cliffs which reduces sediment supplies;
The introduction of beach control structures such as groynes which inhibit long-shore drift;
The construction of harbour breakwaters and dredging of harbour entrances; and
Widespread reclamation of the margins of estuaries²⁴.

Continuing with current levels of protection on the coastline may not be economically viable everywhere. Intergenerational issues could arise if certain decisions made now preclude adaptation in the future or cause further problems down the line. For instance, allowing certain kinds of development today may make it impossible to "roll back"²⁵ in the future, making those new communities vulnerable to the predicted increase in extreme events.

In addition, sea level rise and the impacts of climate change will increase the challenges of protecting people and properties on the coast. Global sea level rise is currently 1.8 mm per year but the land in the South-East is sinking which means that sea-level rise is greater than the global average. By the 2080s sea levels may rise between 26cm and 86cm in parts of England. Periods of heavy winter rainfall may become more frequent and account for a higher proportion of winter rain²⁶. In addition, climate models are predicting overall fewer storms but a greater number of intense storms and associated increase in wave height²⁷.

²¹ Foresight (2004) Future flooding: Phase 1 Technical Rep
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/heritagecoasts/default.aspx> - Drivers, scenarios and work plan, Available:

http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/CompletedProjects/Flood/Docs/Drivers_Scenarios_and_Workplan_Main_Report.asp (accessed: 7 November 2009).

²² MCCIP (2008). Annual Report Card 2007-2008 [online] available at:
<http://www.mccip.org.uk/arc/2007/default.htm> (accessed: 7 November 2009).

²³ MCCIP (2008). Annual Report Card 2007-2008 [online] available at:
<http://www.mccip.org.uk/arc/2007/default.htm> (accessed: 7 November 2009).

²⁴ Foresight (2004) Future flooding: Phase 1 Technical Report - Drivers, scenarios and work plan, Available:

http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/CompletedProjects/Flood/Docs/Drivers_Scenarios_and_Workplan_Main_Report.asp (accessed: 7 November 2009).

²⁵ 'Roll back' involves physical relocation of businesses, homes and other assets further inland away from the threat of coastal erosion.

²⁶ Defra on behalf of the UK Biodiversity Partnership (2007) Conserving biodiversity in a changing climate: guidance on building capacity to adapt. Available:
<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/Library/BRIG/CBCCGuidance.pdf> (accessed: 7 November 2009)

²⁷ MCCIP (2008). Annual Report Card 2007-2008 [online] available at:
<http://www.mccip.org.uk/arc/2007/default.htm> (accessed: 7 November 2009).

2. Methodology and approach

Introduction

Our approach to this research drew on our experience of working in community engagement and urban regeneration and was informed by an understanding of the flood and coastal defence policy context. The research approach has been highly collaborative and our findings have developed over the life of the project in a continuous iterative process between the research team, Defra and the project Steering Group. The project Steering Group included inter alia representatives of the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Communities and Local Government, Community Development Foundation, local authorities and Coastal Groups.

Our research has also aimed to involve those most affected by coastal change as well as those authorities with responsibilities to manage that change. The affected communities have been involved through a series of case studies and participation in the project workshop (see Section 2.5.1). Authorities and public bodies have been involved through interviews, case studies and the workshop.

Several research tasks were undertaken. The findings of each of the tasks informed the next research stage:

- A policy and context review (see Section 2.2);
- Stakeholder interviews (Section 2.3);
- Five case studies in coastal communities (Section 2.4);
- Preparation of a Draft Guidance on CAPE, based on the policy and context review, the interviews and case studies (Section 2.5);
- Stakeholder and community workshop to test and refine the Guidance (Section 2.5.1);
- Public consultation on the Guidance, alongside Defra's new Coastal Change Policy (Section 2.5.2); and
- Preparation of a final Guidance on CAPE based on the consultation comments, the findings of the workshop and Defra's comments (Section 2.6).

The following sections 2.2 to 2.6 describe our approach to each of the tasks and stages of the research.

Policy and context review

The policy and context review included both peer reviewed and grey literature,²⁸ as well as key policy documents and several organisations' websites. The review was undertaken in order to establish current policy and governance of coastal areas, challenges to policy implementation and emergent thinking on community participation in adaptation planning. In this review we explored wider contextual issues such as climate change, coastal erosion and flood risk, as well as the government's Sustainable Communities agenda. Relevant legislation and strategy in both planning and coastal management were reviewed, with an aim to establish opportunities for involving communities in adaptation planning within the current and emerging policy framework. The emphasis was to find synergies or barriers to community adaptation planning.

The desk review tested our initial understanding of adaptation planning and subsequently community adaptation planning and engagement. The findings of this review have been included in the introductory section of this report and have informed Section 3 on Findings. Part of our context review has been included as appendices to this report (Appendices 1 to 5).

The review also informed the sampling and questionnaires for our stakeholder interviews and our selection criteria for case studies.

²⁸ Specialist/technical/research publications not always widely available.

Stakeholder interviews

We conducted six semi-structured interviews with high level stakeholders representing relevant organisations with a say in coastal change or community engagement. Lines of questioning included policy drivers and scope for community adaptation, institutional frameworks, potential funding sources or triggers, organisational relationships and community engagement practice. Interviewees' understanding of and vision for community adaptation planning were also explored. Interviewees represented the following organisations:

Environment Agency (national coastal policy);
Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG);
Natural England;
Coastal Communities Alliance (national regeneration partnership);
GO-East Coastal Initiative; and
North Norfolk District Council.

The key findings of the interviews have been incorporated to Section 3. The findings of the interviews aided in the identification of case studies and have informed the findings and conclusions included in this report.

Case studies

Five case studies with coastal communities were undertaken. The case studies had different foci in terms of scale, administrative level, specific adaptation issues, levels of community organisation and geographical location. Our brief stressed that case studies should aim to learn from the experience of existing active communities, but more importantly, explore less active coastal communities at varying levels of risk and risk awareness. The case studies were selected in consultation with Defra and the intention was to obtain as much of a spread as possible and cover a range of examples:

Range of coastal issues: erosion, tidal flood risk, sea level rise
Range of communities: different skills, deprivation, awareness levels, different degrees of activism;
Range of administrative levels: whole coast (county), local authority, parish council, town, village; and
Range of 'flash points': recent flooding, SMP consultations, poor engagement, visible erosion.

The five case studies were undertaken in:

Mablethorpe (Lincolnshire);
Barrow (Cumbria);
Suffolk Coast;
Happisburgh (North Norfolk); and
Shaldon (Devon).

The case study information was gathered through a range of methods (see Appendix 6). The findings of the case studies have been summarised in Table 1 and the full write up included in Appendix 6.

Draft guidance and consultation

A draft Guidance document was produced based on the findings of the interviews, case studies and desk review. The draft Guidance was also discussed in several meetings with Defra. Issues such as how long the Guidance should be, the intended audience, lay out and format were discussed and agreed with Defra prior to publication.

The Draft Guidance was issued as a 'working draft' alongside the new Defra Coastal Policy in June 2009. The Draft Guidance was amended following a stakeholder workshop (Section 2.5.1)

and public consultation on the Guidance as part of the wider consultation on Defra's Coastal Change Policy.

2.5.1 Workshop

A stakeholder workshop was organised by Scott Wilson in August 2009. The workshop took place in London during the formal consultation on Defra's Coastal Change Policy. The aim of the workshop was to present the findings of our research to date and to test the usefulness of the Guidance with a range of statutory stakeholders and community representatives. Invitations were sent to those that had previously been involved in the research (through our case studies or interviews) and to members of the project Steering Group and Defra. The format of the day covered presentations and three interactive sessions. The workshop was conducted under the Chatham House Rule.

The findings of the workshop and feedback from participants were used to finalise the guidance. The workshop notes have been included in Appendix 7.

2.5.2 Consultation on the Guidance

The draft Guidance was published for consultation alongside Defra's new coastal policy. Defra received 75 responses on its Consultation on Coastal Change Policy document which related to the CAPE framework and guidance note. The majority of responses appeared not to have read the detailed draft guidance note, but responded to the summary of the approach provided in section 4 of the policy consultation. In addition, many responses were concerned with policy issues rather than CAPE. Some of these points are relevant to this policy report.

Having reviewed each response we prepared a list of changes based on the key themes running through the consultation responses. The changes were agreed with Defra and a new Guidance document was produced reflecting consultation comments and the findings of the stakeholder workshop. It is worth highlighting that many of the responses welcomed the CAPE approach although many also commented that the approach required resources, high level buy-in from local authorities and capacity building for front-line staff.

Final guidance

The Guidance was finalised in November 2009 taking into account the findings of the workshop and public consultation. It was recommended during the consultation that the Guidance is evaluated and reviewed. This could be done as part of Defra's evaluation of the Coastal Change Pathfinders. Box 1 below provides a summary of the Guidance document.

Box 1: Summary of the CAPE Guidance

The Guidance on Community Adaptation Planning and Engagement has 6 core principles underpinning the approach:

Adaptation Planning as a Journey starting where the community is currently at.
Social Justice and Support: Communities most at risk need to be most supported.
Open and Honest Information that communities can trust.
Joined up Coastal Planning that considers new structures and ways of working.
Community Based Partnerships built-up over time.
Vibrant, Empowered Communities where people want to live and visit.

Adaptation planning needs to start where the community is at.

The first section of the Guidance looks at typical starting points for different communities' journeys towards adaptation. The remainder of the Guidance takes the audience through a series of steps which can potentially culminate in the publication of an authority's commitment²⁹ to engage (in a charter, compact or similar).

The seven steps are:

Step 1: Clarify adaptation aims, drivers and scope of decisions. This will set out why you are considering taking action (i.e. why is adaptation needed).

Step 2: Establish how much engagement. This will depend on the type of context and also how many people are affected by the decision and how controversial it is likely to be.

Step 3: Clarify engagement aims and scope. This step involves setting out the aims of the engagement and how much the community can influence.

Step 4: Identify who to engage, through a tailored stakeholder analysis.

Step 5: Draft an integrated engagement and project plan. The plan should set out the decision-making process and points at which engagement will happen.

Step 6: Publish your commitment to engage. Based on all the above, this optional step will help you to produce a charter or other similar document enshrining your commitment to working with communities.

Step 7: Agree engagement methods and approaches. This step aims to help you choose the engagement methods appropriate to the desired outcomes.

Two further elements of CAPE which cut across all the steps are:

Building capacity across all interests. Including skills for engagement and long-term community development.

Working with other planning processes on the coast. This section provides an overview of policies and processes relevant to CAPE.

²⁹ Some of the steps are based on the Building Trust with Communities - Working with Others (BTwC) tool developed for the Environment Agency.

3. Findings

3.1 Introduction

This section provides a discussion of the key findings from research undertaken for this project (desk review, case studies and interviews). The findings of the study have fed into the development of the CAPE Guidance. In addition, Section 3.3 below provides a summary of the implications of the research which are reflected in the CAPE Guidance.

Section 3.4 below provides an account of the gaps and limitations of our research.

3.2 Current practice of adaptation planning and engagement

Our study focussed mainly on the barriers to community adaptation planning and engagement on the coast. Therefore, the negative experiences of communities may be overrepresented in this section. It should also be noted, particularly in relation with the Environment Agency, that they have acknowledged that community engagement has been an issue in the past and they are working to address it. For instance, the Building Trust with Communities (BTwC) tool was developed in response to previous negative experiences of working with communities (see the Shaldon case study in Appendix 6). In addition, the Environment Agency has recently appointed coastal engagement officers to improve community engagement practices in relation to new coastal erosion maps, SMPs and other coastal issues.

Our project identified the following findings in relation to current practice of adaptation planning and engagement:

Current approaches to community engagement on the coast:

Our study found evidence that communities feel they are not being meaningfully involved in decision making (e.g. SMP2), which can lead to distrust. This appears to be a continuing and persistent perception, mostly revolving around SMP processes, where communities feel that key policy decisions are drafted and endorsed by professionals without taking the community along with them;

Coastal communities feel that the main barrier for increased community involvement in planning and implementing adaptation measures is the current top-down decision-making structure;

A key issue is the current lack of trust in authorities (particularly national agencies and central Government); Consultation is seen as a 'rubber-stamping' exercise. Communities feel nothing ever comes out of consultation even though they are 'consulted to death';

Skills and resources issues. For engagement to be adequately planned and carried out a wide range of competencies are needed. Our project found that not all lead players have the right skills for planning and delivering effective and efficient engagement; and

More use of independent facilitators and brokers has been highlighted throughout the research. This would help to bridge the lack of trust in authorities and also the lack of engagement skills.

Current awareness of climate change, coastal change and the need to adapt

Both across and within communities there is a range of levels of awareness of coastal and climate change issues which results in a number of different engagement situations and needs. The implication of this is that 'adaptation' is a contested issue without a clear, agreed definition (see also Appendix 2);

For engagement to be meaningful communities have to be involved in defining the problem and deciding on the options;

Communities are at very different stages in terms of engagement and awareness of coastal change - the need to 'adapt' or 'change' is not well understood at the local level. For example some communities we met appeared unaware of the risk of flooding or erosion, or that there are proposals to defend/ not to defend their community; People are more likely to adapt if they have the awareness, knowledge, skills and experience to engage with the technical aspects of adaptation measures; and

The current approach of presenting potential solutions before communities are aware of the problem leads to conflict, as seen at both the strategic (SMP) and the scheme level.

Who should lead in adaptation planning?

There are a large number of planning processes and strategies that affect the coast and various organisations with responsibilities. This complexity causes confusion in communities. One respondent to the Coastal Change Policy consultation felt that:

“Decision-making in relation to the coastal zone is complex. Communities find it difficult to engage in technical documents such as SMPs, EMPs, CHaMPs etc. and even when they do they find they have very little influence, due to the limited scope of the documents and their technical bias. The focus of spatial planning is on new development and finds it difficult to tackle adaptation of existing communities. Whilst people readily engage with the preparation of LDDs, their scope to manage coastal change impacts is extremely limited (due partly to the narrowness of the tests of soundness associated with them).”³⁰;

The large number of organisations involved means that there is also a lack of leadership on coastal issues. In terms of who should be the lead in adaptation planning, there seems to be a consensus that local authorities should fulfil this role. This raises a further issue, outside the remit of this project, as to whether local authorities have sufficient resources and skills;

Resourcing CAPE may be particularly challenging for smaller rural local authorities or for those that may have a small stretch of coast;

There seems to be widespread agreement that existing structures and groups should be used to implement CAPE (rather than creating new governance structures or groups); and

Local Agenda 21 officers were used as an example for a model on how adaptation could be promoted by public bodies and local authorities in particular. Another useful suggestion is the establishment of a network of climate change champions to promote adaptation at the local level.

3.3 Implications for engagement of coastal communities

The findings of our research have the following implications for CAPE:

- Comprehensive and long-term approach: CAPE needs to invest in finding ways to ensure greater long-term engagement of citizens and communities. However, at the same time it should contribute to (rather than just add-on) joined-up involvement and engagement across government departments and local authorities to improve inclusive decision-making based on active community involvement;
- Bottom-up approach: CAPE should encourage ‘bottom-up’ citizen perspective and make it clear who will make the final decision to act on locally-driven adaptation initiatives;
- Building on existing structures and mechanisms: Many local authorities already have in place well established mechanisms for neighbourhood and service-specific engagement and CAPE should not require the setting up of new mechanisms that will duplicate these functions. Rather than designing new networks and approaches, CAPE should help authorities offer ‘appropriate levels of involvement’ by building on existing ones. Also, CAPE needs to be applied to the planning and local development framework to make ‘statements of community involvement’ (SCIs) more meaningful and effective;
- Capacity and resources: In order for CAPE to be effective, there is a need for ‘easier means’ for residents to take part in consultation, as well as training and empowerment of local communities to enable them to be involved. Having a community development worker engaging people in CAPE is a beginning, but specific resources and skills may be required to include marginalized, vulnerable groups and young people in the CAPE process;
- Clear expectations: CAPE needs to be clear about the purpose and limits of involvement and the role of elected members in taking difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions, recognising that within communities there will be differing interests; and
- Clarity in the use of language: There was consensus on the need for clear language with some respondents asking for clarity on what ‘community adaptation planning’ means in practice at the local level.

In the context of the above, the project has produced a definition of community engagement in the context of coastal adaptation (CAPE):

“CAPE is a long term, community centred planning process which aims to involve those most affected by the risks and opportunities presented by coastal change in order to develop understanding, forward thinking, practical and sustainable solutions for coastal communities and places”.

A review of the consultation process reveals that community engagement should largely operate according to the five core principles of community engagement (as outlined in the PPS12). These five principles would help ensure that engagement is:

³⁰ Peter Frew, Coastal Strategy Manager, North Norfolk District Council

- appropriate to the level of planning;
- from the outset – leading to a sense of ownership of local policy decisions;
- continuous – part of ongoing programme, not a one-off event, with clearly articulated opportunities for continuing involvement;
- transparent and accessible – using methods appropriate to the communities concerned; and
- planned – as an integral part of the process for making plans.

Effective community adaptation planning will require participation and input from a range of key stakeholders. Key 'statutory' consultees³¹, including challenge bodies, must be consulted at policy preparation. Secondly, as CAPE is being developed, consultation activities should include those most affected. It is largely up to the responsible body to identify these key stakeholders.

Furthermore, consultation objectives should relate to the intention of the plan and also need to correspond with the level of Government that is preparing the plan. Within the context of coastal management, central Government predominantly engages in consultation for the purposes of information giving. In contrast, consultation exercises carried out by local levels of government and for plans covering sub-regional areas are more likely to include acting together and supporting objectives. For example, the preparation of Sustainable Community Strategies utilise consultation in order to achieve stakeholder buy-in with organisations that will play a key role in the delivery of the strategies vision and objectives. SMPs include a 'Key Stakeholder Group' to provide a formal mechanism for stakeholder involvement in the duration of the plan's development, allowing these stakeholders to act together.

The current and emerging planning and policy framework for consultation as a whole represents a progressive movement towards the empowerment of communities and individuals to inform the decisions which affect them most. However, the overarching structure within which these voices are heard is driven by the objectives of Government. This framework provides the rules and processes for bringing the viewpoints of Government and communities closer together and through which the community led planning for coastal communities will be integrated.

The use of community development practices to build empowerment is still contentious and some see the empowerment White Paper as a lost opportunity. Effective community adaptation planning requires that various public consultation mechanisms are clearly described, internal mechanisms are established to process and integrate consultation representations within decision making and that this proceeds in a transparent manner. Community Development workers are particularly needed in terms of addressing inequalities and front line communication skills are essential to spreading the message and engaging effectively.

Table 1: Summary and key findings of the case studies

Case Study	Summary and key findings
Mablethorpe (East Lindsey)	<p>Small coastal resort in the East of England</p> <p>The town is at high risk of tidal flooding, currently defended</p> <p>Very low awareness of risk: as long as defences are maintained the community will feel safe</p> <p>No awareness of 'coastal change', or the need to adapt; residents do not believe in climate change</p> <p>Largely elderly population, high deprivation, high concentration of vulnerable dwellings, the town is in need of regeneration</p> <p>The community are active and organised e.g. through a Neighbourhood Management Board</p> <p>Very low levels of trust in authorities, particularly in the EA</p> <p>SMP2 consultation and rumours have created worry that the town is not going to be defended for much longer.</p>
Happisburgh	<p>Small village on the North Norfolk coast, tourist destination</p> <p>The main issue is the lack of maintenance of sea defences</p> <p>SMP2 identified this as an area for 'No active intervention', causing outcry</p> <p>North Norfolk District Council is developing a Coastal Management Plan and</p>

³¹ Statutory consultees: The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires local authorities to consult with 'statutory consultees' on their LDFs. The full list is included in the The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and includes the EA, Natural England, English Heritage, Regional Bodies, etc.

Case Study	Summary and key findings
	<p>have increased efforts to involve local communities in coastal planning Local group (CCAG) campaigning and lobbying Government since 1999 for compensation for households affected by erosion The group's high profile has strengthened community sense that they can influence events Current top-down decision-making structure and the lack of integration of coastal management institutions and policies are seen as the main barriers for increased community involvement</p>
Suffolk Coast	<p>220 miles of coast and estuary, 40 miles of heritage coast, most of which is AONB Many small towns and long stretches of coast under threat Strong estuary campaigns, partnerships and strategy groups ICZM approach encouraging innovation and strong on facilitation SMP process fired up activists with early presentation of potential solutions viewed as very threatening The above led to both the evidence and science being heavily challenged Stakeholder influence in SMP2 doubted by activists and any pressure to rush to adaptation rejected Communities want more time to plan, without early 'abandonment' looming over them</p>
Barrow	<p>90% of people on coastal wards live on Walney Island; coastal management divided between Planning (local authority) and Capita Symonds (Consultancy) Well organised community in general, but not focusing on coastal change Very low levels of awareness about coastal change and adaptation Flashpoint around a mobile home community, which may be lost to managed realignment Elderly residents – perceived inability to engage, lack of confidence Just one Ward Councillor acting as channel of information and engagement Borough Council and County Council have many other things on their plate – representativeness of a small coastal minority? EA and Defra seen as distant agencies, with no means of being sensitive to local concerns</p>
Shaldon (Devon)	<p>Small, pretty fishing village Fairly affluent with stable older population High risk of tidal flooding, very low awareness Used to pilot EA's Building Trust with Communities (BTwC) approach to engaging with communities Key to separate the problem definition from looking at potential solutions Showed benefits from the right level of engagement, at the right time and using facilitators</p>

3.4 Research gaps and limitations of the study

Research projects are inevitably constrained by time and resources plus external factors. The key gaps and limitations of this study are listed below:

- Timescales: our project provided evidence and supported Defra's Coastal Change Policy. Therefore, most of our research, including case studies had to be done in the space of a few months;
- Changing brief: our study originally set out to explore existing practice of community adaptation planning on the coast. However, it emerged that communities are not ready to discuss adaptation as many of their members do not agree on the problem;
- SMP2 consultations: these were happening during our research and they were very present on our research participants' minds. Therefore our research findings are somewhat skewed by the SMP2 process;
- Small number of case studies: given time and resource constraints, our study does not aim to be representative of all coastal communities. The pathfinder programme and its evaluation should provide an opportunity for our findings to be tested with a larger number of communities;
- Availability of key stakeholders: not all relevant stakeholders have been involved due to lack of availability at the time the research was undertaken; and

- Stakeholder workshop: due to timetabling issues, our stakeholder workshop took place during the school holidays and on the date of a train strike. In addition, the workshop took place in London on a weekday. The consequence of this is that not many community representatives were able to attend this event.

■ **References to published material** ---

9. This section should be used to record links (hypertext links where possible) or references to other published material generated by, or relating to this project.

See footnotes