

Coastal Issues Special Interest Group

On the edge – the action plan

Draft report, November 2004

Prepared by the Isle of Wight Centre for the Coastal Environment for the Local Government Association
Coastal Special Interests Group

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	
<i>On the edge – the coastal strategy</i>	3
<i>On the edge – the action plan</i>	4-8
Recommendations and Implementation	
<i>Europe</i>	4
<i>National Government</i>	5
<i>The Regions</i>	5
<i>Local Government / Coastal SIG</i>	5-8
Programme of Work	8
Glossary	9

Introduction : on the edge – the coastal strategy

'On the edge – the coastal strategy', which was prepared by the Local Government Association's Special Interests Group on Coastal Issues, was launched initially in 2001. The strategy was regarded as a ground-breaking contribution to coastal management policy and set out, for the first time, a vision and priorities for one of England's most important assets – the coast.

Over the intervening period a number of initiatives and research publications have been produced by the European Commission, the government and Coastal Fora as well as by the Local Government Association itself. The LGA Coastal Special Interests Group has commissioned a range of important studies and investigations to encourage implementation of sustainable coastal management in this country through its research programme. The original Action Plan included a range of recommendations directed at the European Union, the government, the Regions and local government as well as for the Local Government Association itself. These commitments for action were highlighted further in an updated four page insert in support of the original strategy document which was re-launched in 2004.

The first Action Plan included the following key tasks which have now been implemented :

- Preparation of the Action Plan itself and prioritisation of the Action Programme.
- Development and management of a website for the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interests Group.

- Establishment of the framework for a local authority 'skills and best practice' database.
- Contact with government ministers, departments and professional and research institutions in order to highlight the work of the Coastal Special Interests Group.
- The development of 'best value indicators' for coastal management.
- Highlighting the roles played by regional 'centres of expertise' in the various fields of ICZM.
- Coastal town regeneration initiatives.
- Financial issues relating to the coast including the standard spending assessment.
- LGA Coastal Risks pack

Over the last eighteen months the actions that were contained in the original Action Plan have been addressed. The Coastal SIG requested that a new Action Plan should be developed following on from the updating of the 'On the edge' Strategy. The process of implementation of ICZM as a result of the European Union's 'Recommendation on the integrated management of coastal zones', it is hoped, will provide new impetus and direction for work in this field.

Key Recommended actions and research tasks

Task	Lead Organisation	Current Action	LGA SIG Role / Research Task
European Level			
1. Ensure successful implementation of the EU 'Recommendation on ICZM' by the government	European Commission DG Environment	Following the adoption of the Recommendation by the European Parliament, EU officials have been meeting regularly with representatives from Member States ensuring that the course of action set out in the Recommendation is being followed uniformly. Defra is the lead government department for ICZM. It commissioned Atkins consultants to carry out a national stocktake of activities relating to coastal management in the United Kingdom. Following on from this Defra must now develop a national strategy for the coast.	To lobby the European Commission and Defra in order to ensure that : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the timescales for actions are being met; all aspects of the EU Recommendation are addressed fully support from coastal fora and coastal groups towards the implementation process is achieved.
2. Maintenance of the 'recognition of the coast' in future EU research, demonstration and exchange programmes	European Commission DG Environment, Regio and Research	Statements relating to support for coastal management initiatives are included in the main funding programmes and calls for proposals.	To ensure that emphasis on the coast is maintained through regular liaison with the Commission and relevant central government departments.
3. Maintain and, where necessary, expand the 'Regional Seas' concept	CPMR	The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) promotes the needs of coastal areas along the European Sea-board; this is achieved through a number of Regional Seas Commissions and through close working with the European Commission and other key organisations.	To review the range and effectiveness of various European Membership bodies and consult with them on issues of coastal interest; recommend appropriate links and affiliations where appropriate (eg. CPMR, AMRIE, CEMR, NORCOAST, COASTLINK, EUCC and others).

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National Level			
4. Ensure effective development and implementation of the national strategy for ICZM in line with the EU Recommendation.	Defra	Whilst a thorough appraisal of ICZM initiatives as part of the national stocktaking has been completed for Defra by Atkins it is now necessary to develop the national coastal strategy.	To ensure that the interests of coastal zones and their representative Coastal Fora are integrated within the national strategy including provision of appropriate resources to maintain the fora and estuaries initiatives.
5. Seek further integration of coastal-related functions at central government level	Defra, ODPM and DTI	There has been some streamlining with both the ICZM and coastal defence functions now lying within Defra. However, other activities are spread across government departments and further integration is sought wherever possible.	Play a leading role in the national debate on a strategy for the coast and contribute to consultations and draft legislation at its formation stage.
Regional Level			
6. Raise the knowledge base on coastal-related issues through active involvement in networks and groups.	Regional Assemblies	The extent of knowledge and information relating to coastal issues in the Regions varies considerably across the country.	Assist the education and dissemination process through involvement by SIG members in working groups and through developing closer liaison with key officers in the Regions.
7. Effectively promote coastal issues through regional planning policy documents, economic and other regional strategies	Regional Assemblies	There is considerable variation in the way that the coast is addressed in documents that have been published to date. In some cases the coast does not feature at all.	To improve linkages with officers in the Regions in order to ensure that coastal issues are properly reflected at Regional policy level.
Local Authority / Coastal SIG Level			
8. Update the LGA Action Plan	LGA Coastal SIG	A draft updated Action Plan has been prepared for consideration initially by the LGA SIGSOG.	To provide a clearly set out programme for actions for 2004-2006.
9. Management of the LGA SIG Website	Isle of Wight Centre for the Coastal Environment	The IWCCE has developed and managed the Coastal SIG website since its inception.	To support continuing improvements and extension of the website to maximise its value to SIG members and other coastal stakeholders
10. Developing the economic case for implementing sustainable coastal zone management.	LGA SIG, Isle of Wight Centre for the Coastal Environment	Coastal and Estuaries Fora have suffered from a lack of sustainable funding streams since their inception. The EU Recommendation on ICZM provides an opportunity to address this problem.	To commission a study which demonstrates the economic justification for central government investment in coastal zone management in a similar way to the investment currently being made in shoreline management.
11. Online toolkit for ICZM	LGA Coastal SIG, Suffolk	A feasibility study for the toolkit has been	Coastal SIGSOG to give further

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education and information exchange	Coastal DC, IWCCE	prepared in draft. Full financial implications require analysis including staff time inputs and ongoing costs.	consideration to the proposal.
12. Activity survey – coastal management in practice	LGA SIG, Local Authority Members, coastal consultants, Defra	The extent to which ICZM is implemented across the country is not clearly established. There are 'Centres of Excellence' within certain Coastal Fora but in other areas there is very little activity.	To commission a study to identify the extent of coastal management in practice and review the effectiveness, benefits, successes and problems of the current approach.
13. Skills and awareness – oil spill response within local authorities	LGA Coastal SIG, Local authorities, relevant agencies	Local authorities have involvement with oil spill in terms of the initial response to the incident on shore. It is believed there is a very mixed level of experience and skills particularly in view of changes in local government structure and reduction in municipal engineers within local authorities.	Undertake a survey of existing knowledge and competencies and produce an issues paper clearly explaining the responsibilities of local authorities and all the other key organisations.
14. The importance of the coast within Regional agendas	LGA SIG, Regional Assemblies, local authorities	The extent to which the profile of the coastline is considered within the agendas of Regional Assemblies varies considerably across the country.	Undertake a review of the successes and problems associated with integrating coastal issues at a Regional level and assessing and circulating examples of excellence in terms of coastal policy statements to assist this process.
15. Raising the profile of ICZM with government departments	LGA SIG, Defra, ODPM, DTI	Development of the 'National strategy for the coast' by Defra has been described above. The purpose of this task is to raise the profile of the coast through highlighting the activities of the SIG and a range of quality publications that have been prepared on coastal management topics.	Ensure that the profile of the coast is raised through lobbying government departments, interest groups and politicians prior to the launch of a national strategy.
16. Dialogue with the European Commission on implementing ICZM	LGA SIG through Defra	The European Commission is aware of progress by Member States in terms of implementing the EU Recommendation. However, it may be beneficial to hold discussions with key officials in DG Environment to highlight concerns of the SIG in relation to successful implementation in the UK.	Meet officials with DG Environment to discuss how the 'top down-bottom up' approach to ICZM is working now and the aspirations of the LGA SIG for the future. The estimated cost allows for arrangement of a workshop in Brussels in autumn 2005 promoted by LGA SIG.
17. Review of the LGA 'Managing coastal risks' study	IWCCE, University of Cardiff	The LGA Risk Pack will be available very soon and will be widely disseminated.	It is recommended that a survey be conducted at the end of the first year to assess the usefulness of the document and

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			lessons learnt from this important research task.
18. Promoting safety at the coast (PROSAC)	IW Centre for the Coastal Environment , LGA Coastal SIG	IWCCE is developing an Interreg IIIC project entitled PROSAC (Promoting safety at the coast). The project seeks to reduce risks to coastal users and local authorities who are responsible for safe management of coastal areas.	Consider partnership as part of the proposed submission under the Interreg IIIC programme.
19. Increased membership of the Coastal SIG	LGA SIG	The Coastal SIG is trying to increase its membership through highlighting its role and activities and through the website.	Consider how the membership of Coastal SIG can be significantly expanded in order to increase its strength and effectiveness. This can best be achieved in the first instance through discussions at the SIGSOG.
20. Coastal economic regeneration – addressing market barriers	LGA SIG	Considerable efforts are being made by the LGA SIG and others to raise the profile of the coast in terms of requirements for regeneration. However, it is believed that this case needs to be strengthened in a number of ways.	<p>The SIG can assist this process by raising awareness of emerging government initiatives with respect to reducing barriers to local economic prosperity as well as inviting speakers from economically successful coastal areas to provide best practice.</p> <p>The SIG can benefit from experience of international good practice in coastal economic regeneration and encourage local authorities to lobby Regional Development Agencies on coastal economic issues, as well as seeking a higher status for coastal communities within the economic development policies.</p>
21. Economic regeneration – unique coastal resorts	LGA Coastal SIG	Many coastal resorts have special qualities which have not been highlighted to everyone's advantage. It is believed the SIG can help coastal authorities in marketing their identity more effectively through exchange of good practice.	Invite speaker from English Tourism Council to identify what is being done nationally in this sector relevant to the coast and encourage or seek areas to become involved in preparation for the 2005 'Year of the Sea' initiative.
22. Economic regeneration – socio-economic deprivation	LGA Coastal SIG, local authorities	It is vital for local authorities to respond to national consultation on deprivation and economic trends. It is believed that the SIG can assist this process.	Assist the response to national consultation on deprivation indices; map deprivation and wider economic trends in the coastal areas of England and ensure that the ICZM

On the edge – Action Plan ii, November 2004

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			process recognises the interaction between economic, social and environmental spheres in the coastal zone.
23. Fisheries issues in the UK – Scoping study	LGA SIG, Sea Fisheries, local authorities	An action in the last plan was to review of the Common Fisheries Policy. Fisheries is a sphere of activity being raised regularly at many SIG meetings.	Consideration be given to preparation of a scoping study of key issues of interest to local authorities in relation to fisheries and development of an Action Plan for this topic.

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

AMRIE	Alliance of Maritime Interests in Europe
Arc Manche	A grouping of counties in the south of England and Regions in the north-west France, all of which border the Channel
CEMR	Coalition for Enhanced Marine Resources
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CIRIA	Construction Industry Research and Information Association
Coastlink	A partnership of regions that contributed to the EU Demonstration Programme through the Commission's TERRA (Spatial Planning Programme)
CPMR	“The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) is a grouping of European Local Authorities that was set up in 1973 to ensure that issues relating to peripherality are taken into account in all aspects of European policy. The Conference is divided into five Commissions, namely: the Baltic Sea Commission; the North Sea Commission; the Atlantic Arc; the Mediterranean Commission and the Islands' Commission. These groups meet separately each year and bring their various resolutions to the CPMR's Annual General Assembly. In addition, there are a number of Inter-Commission (Intercom) Groups, including one on fisheries and one on ICZM”.
Defra	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Defra's High Level Targets	High Level Targets set for Coastal Defence Operating Authorities (Coast Protection Authorities and the Environment Agency) to ensure delivery of government flood and coastal defence policy
DTI	Department for Trade and Industry
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and Regions

EA	Environment Agency; regulators of the environment of England and Wales, covering 15 million hectares of land, 36,000 km of river; 5,000 km of coastline and over 2 million hectares of coastal water. Website : www.environment-agency.gov.uk
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Environment Agency
English Coastal Forum (ECF)	A national Forum that meets under the auspices of DTLR to discuss coastal management policy and issues.
EN	English Nature; the government's nature conservation advisors for England. Website : www.english-nature.org.uk
EPSRC	Environment and Physical Science Research Council
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EUCC	European Union for Coastal Conservation
EU Demonstration Programme	Under LIFE Environment, 35 ICZM projects were carried out around the European coastline
EU Recommendation	on ICZM, requiring action by Member States on implementing the Demonstration Programme findings
Eutrophication	Gradual increase in the concentration of phosphorous, nitrogen and other plant nutrients in an ageing aquatic ecosystem
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IWCCE	Isle of Wight Centre for the Coastal Environment
LAs	Local Authorities
LGA SIG	Local Government Association Special Interests Group
LEAPs	Local Environment Agency Plan

LGIB	Local Government International Bureau
NECAG	North-East Coastal Advisory Group
NERC	Natural Environmental Research Council
NORCOAST	Recommendations on improved Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the North Sea Region, an Interreg IIc project
PHARE Programme	An EU funding programme that involves collaboration with former Eastern Bloc States
PPGs	Planning Policy Guidance; a series of Notes issued by the DTLR setting out the government's policy guidance on planning issues, such as the countryside, nature conservation, coastal planning, etc.
RDA	Regional Development Agency
SCOPAC	Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline. One of 17 Regional Coastal Groups covering the coastline of England and Wales comprising local authorities and other bodies with an interest in the shoreline and related matters. Website : www.scopac.org.uk
SEEDA	South-East of England Development Agency
SEERA	South-East of England Regional Assembly
SMP	Shoreline Management Plan. Plans through which local authorities and others provide a framework for sustainable coastal defence policies within a sediment cell or sub-cell
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget (phased funding programme as part of the Government Challenge Fund)
SWRDA	South-West Regional Development Agency