

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:

COASTAL PLANNING

Planning Policy Guidance notes are prepared by the Government, after public consultation, to provide guidance to local authorities and others on policies and the operation of the planning system.

This note covers planning policy for the coastal areas of England and Wales. It sets the general context for policy (Chapter 1) and identifies planning policies for the coast (Chapter 2). Policies for development that require a coastal location are presented in Chapter 3. Guidance is then given on how these policies should be reflected in development plans (Chapter 4).

Since many existing planning policies apply equally in non-coastal areas, they are dealt with by cross-references to other guidance notes.

The Secretaries of State and their Inspectors will have regard to this guidance in dealing with appeals and called-in planning applications, and expect local planning authorities to have regard to it in the exercise of their planning functions.

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1 THE CONTEXT FOR COASTAL PLANNING

Introduction

1.1 The coast is an important national resource. A range of economic and social activities require coastal locations, and certain natural and historic landscapes and habitats are particular to coastal areas. Concerns about rising sea levels and the need for development to be sustainable are focusing increased attention on the special value of the coast.

1.2 Against this background, it is the role of the planning system to reconcile development requirements with the need to protect, conserve and, where appropriate, improve the landscape, environmental quality, wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities of the coast. This is achieved through development plans and planning decisions, which implement policies for the conservation and improvement of the coastal environment, acknowledging the special character of the coast.

Character of the coastline

1.3 The coastline is dynamic and shaped by powerful natural processes. It is varied in its topography, including cliffs, estuarine marshes and mudflats, coastal lowlands and sand dune systems. Each is subject to its individual set of natural processes and has its own special qualities as an environmental economic and recreational resource.

1.4 Approximately 30 percent of the coastline of England and Wales is developed (Annex 1: Note on definitions for length of coastline). Much of this development took place before the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. Since then there has been increasing emphasis on protecting and conserving the undeveloped coast. Following the introduction of "Heritage Coasts" in 1972 (paras 1.16-1.17), a growing proportion of the coast has been protected by the planning system and is actively managed by local authorities, land owners and conservation bodies.

The coastal zone

1.5 The coastal zone extends seaward and landward of the coastline. Its limits are determined by the geographical extent of coastal natural processes and human activities related to the coast.

1.6 For planning purposes, however, as a general rule the limit of the coastal zone in the seaward direction is mean low water mark. Above mean low water mark, local planning authorities have powers to control the development and use of land under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

1.7 Local planning authorities will need to consider how best to define the coastal zone for their areas. This should be based on local circumstances and the key coast-related planning issues to be covered in their planning policies. 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.

1.8 Local planning authorities should recognise that on-shore development can often have an impact off-shore. An example is the effect of development on fish and shellfish stocks, and thus on the livelihoods of coastal communities. They should take this into account when making planning decisions. Likewise, when considering the environmental impacts of developments outside the coastal zone, local planning authorities will still need to consider the effects on that zone.

1.9 Decisions on development proposals below mean low water mark are generally outside the scope of the planning system, although they are subject to control by a number of agencies, usually related to the type of activity. Examples include aggregates extraction, which is subject to the Government View Procedure, and licences for oil and gas, which are issued by the Department of Trade and Industry. Works which interfere with rights of navigation require a consent from the Department of Transport and may require authorisation through the Private Bill procedure or through the proposed order-making procedure set out in the Transport and Works Act 1992. These systems for regulating activities include arrangements for public consultation and for environmental assessment where appropriate.

Designated areas

1.10 Special policies apply to specifically designated areas of high landscape value or of nature conservation or scientific interest. Many of these designated areas include parts of the coastal zone. Some have statutory status, such as National Parks (6 out of 11 have coastal stretches); Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) of which 21 out of 39 include stretches of coast; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

1.11 In addition a number of coastal areas are designated as Green Belt. Other designations are non-statutory, such as the 44 Heritage Coasts. In the interests of nature conservation the Government is currently proposing to designate certain sites as Marine Consultation Areas.

1.12 On the coast many areas are covered by more than one designation as they deal with different

aspects of environmental conservation. Overall nearly 2,000 kilometres of the coast is covered by one or more of these designations. Table 1 and Map 1 indicate areas where conservation interests are particularly important and need to be reflected in development plan policies and in determining planning applications.

International dimension

1.13 In addition to relevant national policy guidance, there is a series of international obligations which affect the coastal zone. Of particular relevance are sites designated under international conventions, such as "Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitats" under the Ramsar Convention. Certain European Community Directives are relevant to the planning and management of the coastal zone (Box 1).

76/160/EEC	Bathing Water
79/409/EEC	Conservation of Wild Birds
85/337/EEC	Assessment of Environmental Effects
91/271/EEC	Urban Waste Water Treatment
92/ 43/EEC	Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Box 1: EC Directives relevant to coastal planning

Existing planning policy guidance

1.14 This PPG highlights issues that are particularly relevant to the coastal zone, although they are often not exclusively coastal. Some issues such as the need to protect the environment while providing appropriately for development, and the need to plan with due regard for hazards from flooding, erosion and unstable land, are not unique to the coast. They are dealt with in other PPGs and Circulars, to which there are cross-references in this PPG. However, there has been specific advice on the planning of the undeveloped coast (DOE Circular 12/72 and WO Circular 36/72). This note expands on this earlier advice which it replaces.

1.15 For issues that directly affect the coast, planning policy guidance exists for green belts in England (PPG 2); the countryside, including National Parks, AONBs and agricultural land (PPG 7); development on unstable land (PPG 14), archaeology (PPG 16 and PPG 16(Wales)); and sport and recreation, including catering for these activities in the countryside and on the coast (PPG 17). Planning policy guidance is proposed for nature conservation and tourism. DOE Circular 17/82 (WO Circular 15/82 and MAFF Circular LDW 1/82), which is being updated, deals with the

control of development in areas subject to the risk of flooding.

Heritage Coasts

1.16 Heritage Coasts are defined by local authorities in consultation with the Countryside Commission or Countryside Council for Wales. Heritage Coast is not a statutory designation. But of the 44 stretches of Heritage Coast, covering one third of the open coast of England and Wales (about 1,500 km), 8 are in National Parks and 29 in AONBs. Only 7 are without either status (Map 1). Significant parts of Heritage Coasts are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, some of which are also National Nature Reserves, of which there are 28 on the coast. Additionally many parts of Heritage Coasts are protected by conservation organisations, most notably the National Trust, which protects more than a third of all defined Heritage Coast (550km). Heritage Coast designation provides a flexible management tool for balancing the requirements of conservation and access in the coastal zone. The designation helps focus attention and resources on the planning and management of the coast.

1.17 The main objectives of Heritage Coasts, as updated in 1991 and endorsed by the Secretary of State, are:

- to conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral and marine flora and fauna, and their heritage features of architectural, historical and archaeological interest;
- to facilitate and enhance their enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features;
- to maintain, and improve where necessary, the environmental health of inshore waters affecting heritage coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures; and
- to take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of the economic and social needs of the small communities on these coasts, through promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features.

The treatment of Heritage Coasts in development plans is set out in paragraph 4.15.

2 PLANNING POLICIES FOR THE COAST

Types of coast

2.1 For planning purposes the coast can be divided broadly into four types:

- the undeveloped coast, conserved both for its landscape value and for its nature conservation interest;
- other areas of undeveloped or partly developed coast;
- the developed coast, usually urbanised but also containing other major developments (eg ports, power stations, etc); and
- the despoiled coast, damaged by dereliction caused by mining, waste tipping and former industrial uses.

2.2 Against this background, the key policy issues for coastal planning are:

- conservation of the natural environment;
- development, particularly that which requires a coastal location;
- risks, including flooding, erosion and land instability; and
- improving the environment, particularly of urbanised or despoiled coastlines.

Conservation policies

2.3 These policies aim to protect and enhance the natural character and landscape of the undeveloped coastline. In areas designated for their natural or historic landscapes, policies will tend to limit development, particularly that which would be visually intrusive. Coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to visual intrusion, because of the high visibility of development on the foreshore, on the skyline and affecting views along stretches of undeveloped coast.

2.4 The coast, particularly the undeveloped coast, is well-endowed with nature conservation and landscape designations. The nature conservation PPG will provide guidance on taking nature conservation fully into account in the planning process. It will give detailed advice on considerations and procedures affecting the SSSI network; sites of national importance (including

National Nature Reserves); and sites of international importance (Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas under the EC Birds Directive and Special Areas of Conservation under the EC Habitats Directive).

2.5 Large development proposals may present the most obvious threat to nature conservation sites. But the cumulative effect of smaller developments can be just as damaging. Sites can be affected by proposals not only within their boundaries, but also on adjacent or upstream locations. Particular care should be taken to assess the impact of proposals affecting estuaries, not only on the immediate site and surroundings, but also of the cumulative effects on the estuary itself.

2.6 Policies for resisting development of the designated parts of the undeveloped coast have largely been effective in controlling the encroachment of development. But this has tended to concentrate development pressures on undesignated stretches of the coast. Local authorities should recognise the need to protect remaining areas of nature conservation value within the developed coast. In some undesignated areas the scope for new development is becoming increasingly limited, and opportunities for development should be sought inland.

2.7 The coast provides many natural habitats of national and international importance which should be protected and conserved. In addition, the coastal zone also includes areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land which need to be recognised in reaching decisions on development. Advice on the status of different types of agricultural land is given in PPG 7 (The Countryside and the Rural Economy). In many areas of the coast, particularly estuaries, the effect of development on other interests, such as fisheries and shell fisheries, can be acute and widespread. The interrelationships that sustain livelihoods dependent on coastal resources, the diversity of wildlife, and the beauty and historic interest of the landscape can all be fragile.

2.8 The coastal zone also has a rich heritage both above and below low water mark. This includes buildings and areas of architectural or historic interest, industrial archaeology, scheduled and other ancient monuments and other archaeological sites. PPG 16 and PPG 16(Wales) provide advice on archaeology and planning, whilst policies for historic buildings and conservation areas are covered by DOE Circular 8/87(WO 61/81).

Policies for development

2.9 On the coast, opportunities for development may be limited by physical circumstances, such as risk of flooding, erosion and land instability, and by conservation policies. Where the coastal zone is only a small part of the territory of a local planning authority it is reasonable to expect provision of land, for example, for housing and employment, to be made elsewhere in the district. Thus, in the coastal zone, development plan policies should normally not provide for development which

does not require a coastal location.

2.10 Therefore, whilst realistic provision should be made in development plans for the foreseeable development needs of an area, the coast, particularly the undeveloped parts, will seldom be the most appropriate location. Few developments require a coastal location. Given both the physical and policy constraints in most parts of the undeveloped coast, it should not be expected to accommodate new development that could be located inland or in existing developed areas.

2.11 The developed coast, by contrast, may provide opportunities for restructuring and regenerating existing urban areas, thereby improving their appearance and the environment. This approach can be particularly beneficial in areas of significant architectural or historic interest. Opportunities also exist for reclaiming derelict land. Where new development requires a coastal location, the developed coast will usually provide the best option, provided that due regard is paid to the risks of erosion or flooding. As mentioned in paragraph 2.6 areas of nature conservation interest on the developed coast will normally require protection.

2.12 Policies for types of development that require a coastal location are dealt with in Chapter 3 below.

Policies for risks

2.13 Due to the nature of coastal geology and landforms, there are risks, particularly from flooding; erosion by the sea; and land slips and falls of rock. The policy in these areas should be to avoid putting further development at risk. In particular, new development should not generally be permitted in areas which would need expensive engineering works, either to protect developments on land subject to erosion by the sea or to defend land which might be inundated by the sea. There is also the need to consider the possibility of such works causing a transfer of risks to other areas.

2.14 Policies should seek to minimise development in areas at risk from flooding, erosion and land instability. The degree of risk involved will have to be carefully considered and policies will specifically be needed to control or restrict development:

- in low-lying coastal areas;
- on land close to eroding cliffs or other eroding coastlines; and
- on land in coastal areas subject to instability.

Such policies should be kept under regular review.

a. Flooding, erosion and land instability

2.15 Rising sea levels and recent cases of severe coastal flooding have focused attention on minimising both the risk to life and damage to property. This should be done by identifying areas likely to be at risk from flooding. Advice will be given in a revised version of DOE Circular 17/82 (WO Circular 15/82 and MAFF Circular LDW 1/82).

2.16 A precautionary approach is also required for policies relating to land affected, or likely to be affected, by erosion or land instability. In the case of receding cliffs, development should not be allowed to take place in areas where erosion is likely to occur during the lifetime of the building. These areas should be clearly identified and mapped, and shown in development plans.

2.17 Land instability occurs in some coastal areas. PPG 14 (Development on Unstable Land) stresses both the role of development plans in identifying areas where unstable land is a physical constraint and the value of adopting a clear policy toward development applications in these areas. In coastal areas, PPG 14 suggests that local planning authorities should not normally permit built development where there is potential for landslips during the lifetime of the structure.

b. Coastal protection and defence

2.18 Protection against erosion and defence against flooding can have a considerable effect on the coastal environment. Whilst improvements to existing sea defence works are not usually subject to control, planning permission is required for new works. Their impact on the environment and on the natural movement of material along the coast should be taken into account in reaching planning decisions. The effects on economic activity should also be considered.

2.19 In low-lying, undeveloped coastal areas, options for coastal defence may include a policy of managed retreat. In such areas it should not be presumed that it will be economically justified to maintain the existing coastal defence. Planning policies should take this into account. It may be appropriate to restrict development in such areas pending decisions on coastal defence, so that options remain open.

Environmental assessment

2.20 Many development proposals which are likely to have significant effects on the coastal environment, including effects on the natural environment and significant visual impact, will be subject to environmental assessment. In accordance with EC Directive 85/337, environmental assessment is mandatory for certain major projects, such as oil refineries, large power stations,

integrated chemical installations and ports. For a wider range of other types of project, such as reclaiming land from the sea, extracting minerals, oil or gas, other chemical plants, harbours, flood-relief works, marinas, holiday villages and waste water treatment plants, environmental assessment is required if the particular proposal is likely to have significant environmental effects by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

2.21 In the case of projects that require planning permission, the Directive has been implemented by the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 (SI No 1199). DOE Circular 15/88 (Welsh Office 23/88) provides further advice. Improvement works for flood defence and land drainage are subject to the Land Drainage Improvement Works (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 (SI No 1217). Projects which require consent outside the planning system, such as dredging of marine aggregates, are subject to environmental assessment where appropriate under the relevant consent procedures. Where consent for works, such as a barrage or a port, is sought by means of a private or hybrid Bill, the promoters will be required to carry out environmental assessment and to deposit an environmental statement with the Bill, or obtain a direction by the Secretary of State that an environmental statement is not required.

Policies for improving the environment

2.22 Environmental considerations must be taken into account in preparing development plans. These plans are required to include policies and proposals for the improvement of the physical environment and for the conservation of natural beauty and amenity of the land. These policies and proposals may include action by the local planning authority, often in partnership with other agencies:

- to improve and enhance the coast in areas of natural beauty and of high conservation value;
- to regenerate rundown coastal towns and ports; and
- to restore stretches of the despoiled coastline.

2.23 Certain improvements can be achieved through proposals such as the removal of eyesores, and the provision of car parks, long distance footpaths and interpretation centres in appropriate locations. It will be for developers, whether public or private, to bring forward proposals for improvements, perhaps with support from the Countryside Commission or the Countryside Council for Wales. In many cases, the initiative for these proposals may come from the local authority, whether as landowner or as the authority promoting improvement of the coast.

2.24 Areas needing improvement are often in built-up areas, such as seaside resorts and ports. Plans should seek to improve the attraction of such areas as resorts and to regenerate harbour/port areas by designating land as suitable for new functions and activities. Tourism developments are likely to play an important role in such regeneration initiatives.

2.25 Stretches of coast damaged by industrial and urban development, mining or waste disposal, will need proposals for improving the environment. This will be an essential prerequisite for restoring the physical environment and securing economic and physical regeneration. Suitable cases for such treatment will include former industrial sites, port facilities and derelict land. These stretches of coast will often require long-term programmes for their regeneration.

3 POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENTS THAT REQUIRE A COASTAL LOCATION

Introduction

3.1 As indicated in the previous chapter, there are uses and activities which require a coastal location. The scope for accommodating such uses and associated developments should form part of the analysis in drawing up policies, for example, for:

- tourism;
- recreation;
- developments, including ports, marinas and industries importing bulky raw materials, that depend on access to the sea;
- mineral extraction;
- energy generation; and
- waste water and sewage treatment and disposal.

More detailed guidance under these headings is given in the following sections.

a. Tourism

3.2 Tourism is a rapidly-expanding activity which can require a coastal location and supporting infrastructure. In many coastal areas, such developments should normally be guided to existing urban areas, particularly where they can contribute to the regeneration of seaside resorts and waterfront areas. Planning policy guidance on tourism to be issued shortly will cover this issue in more detail. In addition it will contain advice on holiday caravan sites.

b. Recreation

3.3 PPG 17 on Sport and Recreation contains general advice on planning for recreation, including water-based recreation, in the countryside. This PPG supplements that advice for coastal areas. PPG17 makes clear that recreation and conservation objectives are capable of reconciliation in most cases, including National Parks, AONBs and Heritage Coasts. If there is irreconcilable conflict, conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty must take precedence.

3.4 The coast is a popular destination for recreational activities and there have been growing pressures on its capacity. The natural beauty and landscape variety of the coast, its nature conservation interest and its various natural resources for recreation, such as water, beaches and cliffs, make it a major attraction. In most coastal areas, the aim should be to balance and reconcile these interests and contain the impact of these activities through appropriate management measures. Recreation activities in the coastal zone should be appropriate and in harmony with it.

3.5 One particular type of development where there has been a rapid increase in demand in the last 20 years has been for marinas and other facilities for boat mooring, parking and launching. This demand is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Although demand varies considerably from region to region, each year additional new craft put growing pressure on existing facilities. Policies for development of further facilities should be based on an assessment of the capacity of the local environment to accommodate further water-based recreation.

3.6 Policies should encourage the imaginative re-use of disused commercial docks as part of the regeneration of such areas, whilst conserving and restoring landmarks and structures of special historic, architectural or archaeological interest. The use of redundant agricultural land adjacent to tidal water which may be of low ecological value, could also provide opportunities for water-based developments. Such areas could provide new moorings, but care must be taken to ensure that they respect local interests and the natural environment.

3.7 When considering applications for marinas, local planning authorities should pay particular attention to arrangements for access and parking. Any associated development should be assessed separately, on its own merits, taking into account whether it requires a coastal location.

3.8 Recreation facilities, particularly for water-based activities, create pressures for on-shore facilities in the form of clubhouses, jetties and slipways. The impact of such facilities will need to be carefully considered, particularly on the undeveloped coast. The loss of traditional, boating-related facilities (e.g. boatyards and boathouses) to other uses that do not require a waterside location should normally be discouraged.

3.9 Public access to the coast should be a basic principle, unless it can be demonstrated that this is damaging to nature conservation or impractical. This applies both to the developed and undeveloped coast. Whenever appropriate both new developments and regeneration schemes should seek to include, through planning obligations under S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, public access as a positive feature of the development.

c. Major developments

3.10 Before major developments are permitted it will be essential to demonstrate that a coastal location is required. Proposed developments of national or regional importance that require a coastal location will normally be included in structure plans. Examples of such projects include refineries, ports, barrages and oil and gas terminals. Such proposals are no exception to the general rule requiring all planning applications to be determined in accordance with development plan policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. They will usually require environmental assessment. To assist decisions on such applications, it is important that development plan policies are well grounded in an understanding of coastal processes (paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6).

d. Mineral extraction

3.11 The coast is an area where minerals have long been extracted: stone, aggregates and, more recently, oil and gas. Given the sensitivity of many coastal areas, exploration for and exploitation of such minerals needs to be undertaken with considerable care. However, except in some particular circumstances, the planning issues raised by mineral extraction in the coastal zone are broadly similar to those inland. Therefore, the advice in Minerals Planning Guidance notes is relevant.

3.12 Whilst dunes and beaches may contain valuable resources of sand and gravel, the removal of such materials may adversely affect the stability of the coastal environment and increase the rate of coastal erosion or vulnerability to flooding. Such features may also be of special scientific interest. Caution is needed, therefore, to ensure that extraction is not likely to create or increase hazards or to damage important conservation interests. In sensitive and vulnerable areas, such as sand dunes and the sand and shingle foreshore, mineral extraction will generally be inappropriate.

3.13 Where mineral working is permitted in areas designated for their landscape conservation value, it is important that planning conditions should cover landscaping and screening, as well as restoration arrangements. In areas of nature conservation interest sufficient safeguards are required, through planning conditions, to minimise the environmental effects of extraction. These may include such matters as dust emissions or the effects on groundwater movement which may lead to saline intrusion, especially in ecologically-sensitive areas and near water supply wells. Conditions requiring restoration should normally be to end uses which are appropriate to the coast (e.g. nature conservation). Mineral Planning Guidance notes provide advice on suitable areas for mineral working (MPG1), conditions to be attached to permissions (MPG2), provision of aggregates (MPG6 and requirements for restoration and reclamation (MPG7).

e. Energy generation

3.14 The coast is a major attraction for energy generation. In the past this was predominantly for

power stations. More recently proposals are for the development of renewable energy sources such as wind, wave and tidal energy.

3.15 Traditional coal and oil-fired power stations needed water-side locations for cooling and, in some circumstances, the supply of fuel by water. Other types of thermal electricity generation, such as gas-fired and nuclear power stations, required water for cooling only. Newer types of power stations are less dependent on the need for coastal locations for cooling water and fuel supply. Major power station developments on the coast need to balance the national interest for new power stations against the potential impact on the environment, both in landscape and ecological terms. These issues should be considered in the context of the environmental assessment which is required for such developments.

3.16 Newer forms of energy generation from renewable sources, such as wind and tidal energy, can have significant impact on the coastal environment. The forthcoming PPG on renewable energy will provide guidance on the location of new developments, particularly wind power. This highlights the balance that needs to be struck between national policy to develop and exploit renewable energy sources and the need to protect the environment.

f. Waste water and sewage treatment plants

3.17 To improve the quality of bathing waters and to treat sewage discharges into coastal waters, the water and sewerage companies in England and Wales are investing in a programme of waste water and sewage treatment plants. Guidance on this issue is provided in DOE Circular 17/91 (WO62/91).

4 THE COASTAL ZONE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Cooperation and coordination

4.1 Planning the coast is a strategic issue because the scale over which natural processes operate is extensive and often spans regional and local authority boundaries. Therefore, coastal local planning authorities should work closely together on coastal planning issues. There is a general requirement for local planning authorities, when preparing development plans, to consult adjacent planning authorities, as well as those covered by the plan area. In addition PPG 12 and PPG 12 (Wales) advise consultation with any other planning authorities with an interest.

4.2 Regional conferences or other groupings of local planning authorities can provide a means of improving knowledge of coastal processes; defining key issues for coastal planning; and coordinating policies for conservation, coastal defence and development in the coastal zone. In addition, MAFF and the Welsh Office have each initiated a Coastal Defence Forum through which coastal groups can liaise on technical matters of common interest. This provides a new mechanism for encouraging strategic planning of coastal defences.

4.3 It is important that planning policies for the coast in neighbouring areas are consistent. In coastal areas and in estuaries, there is scope for conflict, because:

- development may damage downstream habitats, fisheries or recreational and economic resources;
- development in one authority may reduce the scenic and nature conservation value of coastal areas in another;
- in the absence of a clear strategy, decisions on development can place existing development, coastal defences or fisheries at risk;
- piecemeal reclamation of intertidal areas and other developments may damage and erode nature conservation areas; and
- ports, sea defence and coast protection works and recreational developments may alter the natural processes of erosion and deposition or damage areas of nature conservation value (e.g. intertidal habitats).

4.4 Therefore, the Government encourages cooperative working in the preparation of development

plans, between the local authorities around estuaries and on stretches of the open coast. The Government also emphasises the need to involve fully other relevant agencies and bodies with an interest in the coast (Annexes 2 and 3). Where local authorities are cooperating to prepare management plans, the information gathered may well provide a useful contribution to development plans.

Information

4.5 Planning in the coastal zone requires a good understanding of natural processes. Therefore, local planning authorities in preparing their development plans should cooperate in order to define:

- the coastal zone for planning purposes;
- policies for safeguarding the environment, including policies for nature conservation and for the protection of natural and historic landscapes and archaeological sites and monuments;
- those parts of the coast where either opportunities exist for development for purposes which require a coastal location or for increased levels of recreation and other coast-related activities;
- those parts of the coast where physical constraints and risks either make development inappropriate or require the imposition of special conditions on planning consents; and
- those parts of the coast which need enhancement or regeneration, particularly areas damaged by past development.

4.6 Information may be needed on the current state of the environment and the nature, scale and pace of change due to natural processes and human intervention. The following topics may be included:

Nature and quality of the coastal environment:

- earth science information and other aspects of scientific interest (eg geology, geomorphology);
- ecological diversity, and relative importance as a wildlife habitat for fauna or flora, including all designations;
- baseline information on water and air quality and on the existence and population levels of

key flora and fauna;

- landscape assessments of natural and historic landscapes, including the built environment, monuments and historic parks and gardens;
- agricultural land quality, particularly the extent of the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- areas of fishing interest, particularly in relation to aquaculture and cultivation of shellfish stocks; and
- sites of archaeological and built heritage interest.

Physical processes:

- recent and current rates of erosion and deposition of material within sedimentary cells along the coastline;
- recent and current rates of erosion of sea cliffs and rates of erosion or accretion of sand dune systems and saline marshes;
- areas which have been or could be subject to flooding or land instability; and
- the effects of sea defence and coast protection works on these matters.

Development impact:

- assessment of the impact of development on the environment;
- identification of particular environmental sensitivities and types of development and activity likely to cause particular harm;
- identification of sensitive locations or areas for key types of development; and
- assessment of the likely impact of sport, recreation and tourism developments.

Development trends:

- assessment of trends in demand for developments which require a coastal location and

activities which take place in the coastal zone.

4.7 Much of this data needs to be assembled and analysed at the strategic level. In drawing up the ecological information needed to assist planning, close involvement should be sought with specialist bodies, such as the Welsh Office, MAFF, Countryside Commission, English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales and the National Rivers Authority. Substantial ecological information is often available, but may require specialist advice and assistance to ensure its effective use.

4.8 Earth science and ecological information should provide a firm base for development plans which assess the potential risks; seek to limit the damage to the environment; and guard against the loss of significant coastal habitats and landscapes.

4.9 The Department of the Environment has commissioned research to define the earth science information needed to assist the formulation and monitoring of planning policies and the determination of planning applications in coastal areas. In addition to previous studies of land instability and a review of erosion, deposition and flooding, this will help to ensure that planning policies take full account of the risks to development in coastal areas.

THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

4.10 The broad principles on the content of development plans in PPG 12 and PPG 12 (Wales) apply to coastal planning. References to structure plans also include Part I of Unitary Development Plans, and references to local plans also include Part II of Unitary Development Plans. References to development plans cover all types of plan.

a. Regional and strategic planning guidance

4.11 In England, Regional Guidance from the Secretary of State for the Environment provides the framework for the preparation of structure plans. In the seven regions with a coastline, the conferences of local planning authorities should decide whether they need to include consideration of the following matters in their advice to the Secretary of State:

- the undeveloped coast especially in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts;
- estuaries, estuarine marshes and open coasts;
- recreation, tourism and coast-dependent development, some of which may have regional significance, such as ports, oil and gas, power stations, barrages and forms of renewable

energy generation;

- coastal defence and the need to take account of the risks of flooding, erosion and land instability where they affect large stretches of the coast; and
- improvement and regeneration of the developed and despoiled coast.

b. Strategic Planning Guidance for Wales

4.12 The Welsh Office has prepared a series of Strategic Planning Guidance in Wales (SPGW) papers, which consolidate and re-present the wide range of available strategic guidance material in a consistent and accessible form. Existing designations and policies affecting the coast are presented in the papers issued by the Welsh Office. The Assembly of Welsh Counties (AWC) are taking the lead in coordinating the contributions of the Council of Welsh Districts, National Parks and other interested bodies in assessing existing strategic planning guidance and in providing the Secretary of State with advice on the main strategic issues likely to affect Wales in the next 10-15 years. As part of this exercise the AWC has formed a Coastal Strategy Working Group.

c. Structure and local plans

4.13 Structure plans develop regional planning guidance (Strategic Planning Guidance in Wales) in more detail. They provide the opportunity to set out general policies and proposals for the coastal areas of counties. With the help of regional planning guidance and informal conferences of coastal authorities, structure plan policies should be prepared in consultation with neighbouring counties to ensure that a consistent approach is taken.

4.14 The English and Welsh versions of PPG 12 identify the nine key topics which structure plans should cover. They advise authorities to consider the interrelationship of policies in order to show an integrated approach, for example, in coastal areas. Structure plans should identify the key coast-related policy issues and provide the policy framework, including the general areas over which such policies should operate.

4.15 The Government acknowledges the success of Heritage Coasts in articulating appropriate planning and management policies. The planning policies to be pursued in Heritage Coast areas should be incorporated within development plans. The role of the Heritage Coast and the uses and activities which are or are not likely to be permitted should be defined. Local plans should contain clear policies on public access to the coast.

4.16 Local plans provide an opportunity to define in detail the areas to which specific policies

apply. They may include:

- a coastal zone;
- Heritage Coasts and existing policy designations for conservation of natural and historical landscapes, nature conservation and physical constraints);
- sites for proposed coast-related uses or other proposals (eg recreation facilities, coastal footpaths, nature reserves, marinas, improvement projects and coastal defence proposals);
and
- areas at risk from flooding, erosion and land instability.

In drawing up development plan policies and proposals local planning authorities should take account of the guidance offered in chapters 2 and 3.

4.17 For estuaries and parts of the open coast, local planning authorities and other agencies and interest groups may cooperate to prepare estuary or coastal management plans. These should complement and be consistent with development plans. Development plans should set out the planning strategy and planning policies which will provide the policy framework for management plans. The management plan should be taken into account in preparing and reviewing development plans. Local plans should contain clear policies on public access to the coast.

Cancellation of previous advice

4.18 The following advice is hereby cancelled:

DOE Circular 12/72 (WO 36/72) Planning of the Undeveloped Coast.

TABLE 1:

**LENGTHS OF COASTAL DESIGNATIONS¹
IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

COUNTY	HERITAGE COAST ² (km)	AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY ³ (km)	NATIONAL PARK ⁴ (km)	TOTAL DESIGNATION ⁵ (km)
Avon				
Cheshire				
Cleveland	12		4	12
Cornwall	317	378		378
Cumbria	6	64	30	100
Devon	180	196	27	237
Dorset	91	88		95
Durham				
East Sussex	13	24		24
Essex				
Gloucestershire				
Hampshire		33		33
Humberside	34			34
Isle of Wight	45	64		64
Kent	14	19		19
Lancashire		12		12
Lincolnshire				
Merseyside				
Norfolk	64	98	3	98
North Yorkshire	48		39	48
Northumberland	96	83		96
Somerset	18	5	18	23
Suffolk	57	56		57
Tyne and Wear				
West Sussex		2		2

COUNTY	HERITAGE COAST ² (km)	AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY ³ (km)	NATIONAL PARK ⁴ (km)	TOTAL DESIGNATION ⁵ (km)
ENGLAND TOTAL	995	1,122	121	1,332
Clwyd				
Dyfed	266		264	266
Gwent				
Gwynedd	147	220	36	272
Mid Glamorgan	12			12
South Glamorgan	14			14
West Glamorgan	59	65		65
WALES TOTAL	498	285	300	629
ENGLAND AND WALES TOTAL	1,493	1,407	421	1,961

1. The lengths of designated coastline apply to the open coast, not estuaries, and can broadly be compared to The Countryside Commission figure of 4,400 kilometres for the total length of coastline.

2. Completely defined and laterally defined Heritage Coasts.
Source Countryside Commission 1992.

Estimate calculated at 1:250,000 scale.

The figures shown in this column are **not** cumulative for the figures under the preceding three columns, as most Heritage Coasts are also designated as part of National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These figures represent coastline with either a single designation or, more commonly, a dual designation.

ANNEX 1

NOTE ON DEFINITIONS FOR LENGTH OF COASTLINE

1. Countryside Commission Survey: 1968

The Countryside Commission measured the coast of England and Wales in 1967/68 and published its findings on the length of coastline and its use in 1968 (Countryside Commission, *The Coasts of England and Wales: Measurements of Use, Protection and Development*, HMSO, London, 1968). This survey measured the coastline at high water mark shown on 1 inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey Maps, where this had a direct frontage to the sea. It included inlets only where they could properly be regarded as "arms of the sea", for example below the lowest ferry point or the natural ferry point if no ferry existed. In general, off-shore islands were included.

The survey also measured the lengths of coastline covered by different uses, to see how much was developed or proposed to be developed.

The lengths of coastline in kilometres were:

	Total	Developed	%
England	3,229	802	25
Wales	1,183	189	16
England and Wales	4,412	991	23

Developed coastal frontage consisted of substantially built-up areas, industrial and commercial uses and camping and caravan sites.

2. Joint Nature Conservation Committee: Coastwatch

More recently the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Coastwatch Project (1988-91) has surveyed the entire coastline of Great Britain recording intertidal and coastal habitats and associated human uses at 1:10,000 scale. The definition of the coast included estuaries, inlets and rivers to the point of normal tidal limit. The JNCC's classification of uses differed from that used by the Countryside Commission survey; the closest approximation to the Countryside Commission's 'developed coastal frontage' would be the 'built environment' plus 'recreation'. This has been used for the 'developed' column below. However, in addition to camping and caravan sites, JNCC's definition of recreation includes carparks, golf courses and other sports which were not included in the Countryside Commission's 'developed coastal frontage'.

For comparison the JNCC Coastwatch figures are:

	Total	Developed	%
England	8,520	2,726	32
Wales	2,088	562	27
England and Wales	10,608	3,288	31

ANNEX 2

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES AND STATUTORY BODIES WITH RESPONSIBILITIES AND INTERESTS IN THE COASTAL ZONE

Central Government Departments

Department of the Environment

General policy responsibility for environmental matters. Responsibility for town and country planning, which regulates the development and use of land in the public interest and for landscape and wildlife conservation.

Department of National Heritage

General policy responsibility for the heritage including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and historic wreck sites; sport and recreation policy including water sports in particular and coastal recreation in general. Policy responsibility for domestic and inward tourism, including interests in seaside resorts and waterfront areas.

Department of Trade and Industry

Planning matters affecting both public and private sector industries; the exploitation of industrial mineral resources; the exploitation of coal resources; the licensing of oil and gas exploration and production; and the development of coastal power stations.

Department of Transport

All aspects of marine safety, including safety of navigation throughout UK waters. Responsibility for harbour authorities.

Home Office

Development in the vicinity of penal establishments, and civil defence. Responsible for byelaws in England and Wales.

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food

A number of responsibilities related to the coastline including fisheries management and regulatory powers over the disposal of wastes at sea. Developments below the high water mark require a licence from MAFF under Part II of the Food and Environmental Protection Act 1985. Policy responsibility for flood defence and coast protection in England.

Ministry of Defence

Matters likely to have a bearing on their land holdings, especially if in active use.

Welsh Office

General policy responsibility for environmental matters. Responsibility for town and country planning, which regulates the development and use of land in the public interest; for landscape and wildlife conservation, and for flood defence and coast protection in Wales.

Other Bodies

Cadw

Welsh historic monuments. Archaeology.

Countryside Commission

Landscape conservation. Advises local authorities on where to define Heritage Coasts. Works with local authorities and others to implement landscape protection and improvement policies, and to safeguard existing opportunities for public access and recreation and provide new ones.

Countryside Council for Wales

Landscape and nature conservation. Functions of the Countryside Commission and English Nature for Wales.

Crown Estate Commissioners

Landlords of much of the foreshore and seabed with responsibilities to maintain and enhance the value of the estate and the return obtained from it, but with due regard to the requirements of good management.

English Heritage

Historic buildings and monuments. Archaeology.

English Nature

The statutory adviser to the Government on nature conservation in England, responsible for promoting the conservation of England's wildlife and natural features. Its work includes the selection, establishment and management of National Nature Reserves and Marine nature Reserves; the identification and notification of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; the provision of advice about nature conservation; and the support and conduct of research relevant to these functions.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

All significant matters relating to health and safety, including development at or near to a harbour area.

HM Inspectorate of Pollution

Control of land-based pollution of coastal waters. Regulation of pollutants for land and air.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Responsibilities include the establishment of common scientific standards; undertaking and commissioning or research; advising Ministers on the development and implementation of policies affecting nature conservation for Great Britain; and the provision of advice and dissemination of knowledge to any person about nature conservation.

National Rivers Authority

Management of inshore coastal water quality having statutory responsibilities relating to the environmental quality of controlled waters. Overall supervisory responsibility for flood defence, and a large number of sea defences and some tidal barriers. Conservation responsibilities in coastal waters and land associated with such waters in England and Wales. Maintaining, improving and developing fisheries.

Sports Council

Sport and recreation - through the Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation, which act as forum for discussion. Strategic guidance for sport and recreation in coastal areas.

Regional Tourist Board

Proposals likely to relate to matters covered by regional tourism development strategies.

Water companies

Water and sewerage services generally and retention, treatment or disposal of sewage, trade-waste, or sludge.

ANNEX 3 COASTAL PLANNING CONTACT POINTS

Department of the Environment
Coastal Planning
Room C15/01
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 3EB
Tel: 071 276 4426

Department of the Environment
Coastal Policy Branch
Room N19/11
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 3EB
Tel: 071 276 3077

Department of National Heritage
Heritage Division
Room C9/10A
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 3EB
Tel: 071 276 4725

Department of National Heritage
Sport and Recreation Division
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT
Tel: 071 925 6939

Department of Trade and Industry
Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London, SW1E 6RS
Tel: 071 215 5000

Department of Transport
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 3EB
Tel: 071 276 3000

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
Marine Environmental Protection Division
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London, SW1P 3RJ
Tel: 071 238 3000

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
Flood Defence Division
Eastbury House
30/34 Albert Embankment
London, SE1 7TL
Tel: 071 238 3000

Welsh Office
Environment Division
Cathays Park
Cardiff, CF1 3NQ
Tel: 0222 823176

Welsh Office
Planning Division
Cathays Park
Cardiff, CF1 3NQ
Tel: 0222 823725

Other Bodies

Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments
Executive Agency
Brunel House
9th Floor
2 Fitzalan Road
Cardiff, CF2 1UY
Tel: 0222 465511

Countryside Commission
John Dower House
Crescent Place
Cheltenham
Glouc, GL50 3RA
Tel: 0242 340345

Countryside Council for Wales
Plas Penrhos
Ffordd Penrhos
Bangor
Gwynedd, LL57 2LQ
Tel: 0248 370444

Crown Estate Commissioners
Marine Estates
16 Carlton House Terrace
London, SW1Y 5AH
Tel: 071 210 3000

English Heritage
Fortress House
23 Savile Row
London, W1R 2HD
Tel: 071 973 3000

English Nature
Northminster House
Northminster
Peterborough, PE1 1UA
Tel: 0733 340345

HM Inspectorate of Pollution
Romney House
43 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 3PY
Tel: 071 276 3000

Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Monkstone House
City Road
Peterborough, PE1 1JY
Tel: 0733 62626

National Rivers Authority
Rivers House
Waterside Drive Aztec West
Almondsbury
Bristol, BS12 4AU
Tel: 0454 624409

Rural Development Commission
11 Cowley Street
London, SW1P 3EB
Tel: 071 276 6969

Sports Council
16 Upper Woburn Place
London, WC1H 0QP
Tel: 071 388 1277

Sports Council for Wales
National Sports Centre
Sophia Gardens
Cardiff, CF1 9SW
Tel: 0222 397571

Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation (fora in which many organisations with sport and recreation interests are gathered) and Sports Council regional offices (which act as secretariats to RCSRs):

Northern Region
Aykley Heads
Durham, DH1 5UU
Tel: 091 384 9595

Eastern Region
26/28 Bromham Road
Bedford, MK40 2QP
Tel: 0234 45222

Yorkshire & Humberside Region
Cornet House
Queen Street
Leeds, LS1 4PW
Tel: 0532 436443

Greater London Region
PO Box 480
Crystal Palace Sports Centre
Ledrington Road
London, SE19 2BQ
Tel: 081 778 8600

South East Region
PO Box 480
Crystal Palace Sports Centre
Ledrington Road
London. SE19 2BQ
Tel: 081 778 8600

North West Region
Astley House
Quay Street
Manchester, M3 4EA
Tel: 061 834 0338

West Midlands Region
Metropolitan House
1 Hagley Road
Five Ways
Birmingham, B16 8TT
Tel: 021 456 3444

Southern Region
51A Church Street
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire, RG4 8AX
Tel: 0743 483311

East Midland Region
Grove House
Bridgford Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham, NG2 6AP
Tel: 0602 821887

South Western Region
Ashlands House
Ashlands
Crewkerne
Somerset, TA18 7LQ
Tel: 0460 73491

Regional Offices of the Countryside Commission

Northern Region
Warwick House
Grantham Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE2 1QF
Tel: 091 232 8252

North West Region
2nd Floor
184 Deansgate
Manchester, M3 3WB
Tel: 061 833 0316

South West Region
Bridge House
Sion Place
Clifton Down
Bristol, BS8 4AS
Tel: 0272 739966

Midlands Region
Cumberland House
Broad Street
Birmingham, B15 1TD
Tel: 021 632 6503

Eastern Region
Ortona House
110 Hills Road
Cambridge, CB2 1LQ
Tel: 0223 354462

South East Region
71 Kingsway
London, WC2B 6ST
Tel: 071 831 3510

Yorkshire & Humberside Region
8a Otley Road
Headingley
Leeds, LS6 2AD
Tel: 0532 742935/6

Regional Offices of English Nature

Eastern Region
Northminster House
Peterborough, PE1 1UA
Tel: 0733 340345

North East Region
Archbold House
Archbold Terrace
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1EG
Tel: 091 281 6316/7

North West Region
Blackwell
Bowness-on-Windermere
Windermere
Cumbria, LA23 3JR
Tel: 09662 5286

Southern Region
Foxhold House
Crookham Common
Newbury
Berks, RG15 8EL
Tel: 063523 8881

South West Region
Roughmoor
Bishops Hull
Taunton
Somerset, TA1 5AA
Tel: 0823 283211

West Midlands Region
Attingham Park
Shrewsbury
Shropshire, SY4 4TN
Tel: 074377 611

South East Region
The Countryside Management Centre
Cold Harbour Farm
Wye
Ashford
Kent, TN25 5DB
Tel: 0233 812525

Regional Offices of the Countryside Council for Wales

Dyfed/Powys Region
Plas Gogerddan
Aberystwyth
Dyfed, SY23 3EE
Tel: 0970 828551

North Wales Region
Hafod Elfyn
Ffordd Penrhos
Bangor
Gwynedd, LL57 2LQ
Tel: 0248 370444

South Wales Region
43/44 The Parade Road
Cardiff, CF2 3UH
Tel: 0222 485111

Voluntary Organisations

Campaign for the Protection of Rural
Wales
Ty Gwyn
31 High Street
Welshpool
Powys, SY21 7JP
Tel: 0938 552525

Council for the Protection of Rural
England
Warwick House
25 Buckingham Palace Road
London, SW1W 0PP
Tel: 071 976 6373

Council for National Parks
45 Shelton Street
London, WC21 9HU
Tel: 071 924 4077

Heritage Coast Forum
Manchester Polytechnic
St Augustines
Lower Chatham
Manchester, M15 6BY
Tel: 061 236 1067

Marine Conservation Society
9 Gloucester Road
Ross-on-Wye
Herefordshire, HR9 5BU
Tel: 0989 66017

The National Trust
33 Sheep Street
Cirencester
Gloucestershire, GL7 1QW
Tel: 0285 651818

Open Spaces Society
25A Bell Street
Henley-on-Thames
Oxon, RG9 2BA
Tel: 0491 573535

Royal Society for Nature Conservation
The Wildlife Trusts Partnership
The Green
Witham Park
Waterside South
Lincoln, LN5 7JR
Tel: 0522 544400

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Lodge
Sandy
Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL
Tel: 0767 680551

Wales Wildlife and Countryside Link
Bryn Aderyn
The Bank
Newtown
Powys, SY16 2AB
Tel: 0686 629194

World Wide Fund for Nature
Panda House
Weyside Park
Catteshall Land
Godalming
Surrey, GU7 1XR
Tel:0483 426444

Other Organisations

Natural Environment Research Council
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon, SN2 1EU
Tel: 0793 411500

Royal Yachting Association
RYA House
Romsey Road
Eastleigh
Hampshire, SO5 4YA
Tel: 0703 629962

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