

# Deben Estuary Partnership – working with others to build a Deben Estuary Management Plan

***The Deben Estuary stretches from above Woodbridge to Felixstowe Ferry and lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.***

***Agriculture and marine related businesses, recreation and tourism are all closely linked to the Deben estuary. The estuary is protected by river walls but land is still vulnerable to tidal flooding from the North Sea.***

Working together, the Deben Estuary Partnership, the Environment Agency, Coast and Heaths AONB Unit and the River Deben Association are drawing up an Estuary Management Plan for the Deben.

***Flood risk and estuary defences are being planned taking into account the needs of communities, landowners, businesses, Parish Councils, tourism, wildlife and the environment.***



## How far has the Estuary Management Plan got ?

Steady progress is being made. The background document '**Portrait of the Deben**', which highlights everything that people value about the estuary, has been finished and printed. This gives a description of the river as it is today and will provide the context for the Management Plan.

**The Environment Agency** has been examining recent data about the height and condition of river walls, the value of the land and buildings that they protect. With **Natural England** they have been discussing the legal requirements to protect designated habitats, birds and other species within the estuary.

**Two Forums** have invited specialists to consider the estuary mouth and the special estuary environment.

**The Deben Estuary Partnership** has held a series of consultation meetings with Parish Councils, landowners, riparian owners, river businesses and people who live and work by the river.

**The River Deben Association** has carried out a survey to ask for the views of their members.

The views and opinions, needs and aspirations expressed throughout this stage of the Plan have been collated. Some clear themes are evident and these will now be set in the context of the flood defence and economic data drawn up by the EA, and Natural England's requirement to protect designated habitats.

Now the Deben Estuary Partnership have asked a specialist consultant, Andrew Hawes to provide a short assessment of each Flood Cell (or area of land protected by river walls) detailing the survivability of the existing defences. This will give an approximation of the cost required to make each Flood Cell survivable in 2050 in a 1: 100 year event.



## What are the proposed objectives of the Plan ?

- ***To provide understanding of the Deben Estuary***
- ***To identify risks to those living and working in estuary over 10, 25, 50 and 100 year periods***
- ***To identify different management options and set out choices***
- ***To identify preferred policies - compliant with overarching, strategic obligations***
- ***To set out an Action Plan***
- ***To look at Funding Options***
- ***To set out a Planning Framework which integrates estuary policies with other planning and management policies***

## Will the Plan have a 'vision'?

Based on what we have heard so far the DEP believe that the Plan must recognise the value and importance people have given to the –

- **aesthetic value of landscape** – ‘the lovely place we live in or near’
- **value of agricultural land** – productivity / irrigation well points
- **special qualities of the environment** – habitat and biodiversity
- **many recreational opportunities** – derived from being on or near water

Combined these help to deliver stable, economic and social wellbeing



## What do people say they want to the Plan to address so far ?

### Flood risk and defence

#### ***Protect property, businesses and farmland***

- Manage the narrow mouth of the estuary for benefit of the whole estuary
- Secure and manage the maintenance and improvement of river walls
- Protect and ensure resilience against lasting flood damage for as long as possible
  - Manage overtopping of walls
  - Protect properties at Felixstowe Ferry and Waldringfield

### Flood and emergency resilience

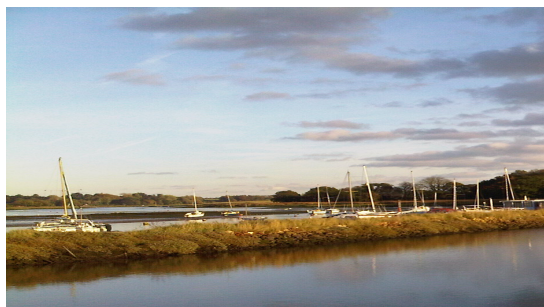
- Encourage all communities to have Emergency Plans – particularly if roads or property could be affected by flooding

### Business viability

- Support marine businesses and specialist industries
- Maintenance of current moorings
- Seek supportive planning infrastructure
- Protect water abstraction points for irrigation

### Navigation

- Establish an estuary wide policy on beneficial use of dredgings – recharge saltmarsh



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### Environment, landscape and heritage

#### ***Conserve and enrich the natural environment***

- Improve saltmarsh / research why loss occurs
- Conserve, sustain and create habitats - high value sites / buffer sites / natural corridors
- Value the waterscape
- Secure stringent, long term mitigation to offset impact of development in the wider estuary area



### Recreation and tourism

#### ***Balance the benefits of tranquil areas with growing demand for recreational enjoyment.***

Work with partners to :

- Encourage green tourism – walking, cycling
- Retain the Bawdsey / Felixstowe foot ferry
- Maintain the existing footpaths but resist new routes to the river
- Sustain visitor facilities in existing ‘hot spot’ areas
- Manage existing car parks more effectively,

## What happens next ?

### Will all these proposals be possible ?

**The new Plan will focus on what can be delivered but Government funding will not be available to meet all the cost of the flood defence work that people would like to see - money will have to be found from other sources**

**The Plan must balance a range of demands as well as complying with relevant legislation - some proposals may conflict with others so a consensus will have to be reached about the way forward.**

**There will be choices and decisions to be made. Please come to the next round of meetings in the New Year when these issues will be debated.**

Deben Estuary Partnership