

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 25 July 2007

Subject: **Introduction to Thames Estuary 2100**

Report of: Director of Planning  
South East England Regional Assembly

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Committee note the development of this flood risk management plan for the Thames estuary.

**Purpose of Report:**

To introduce the Committee to this flood risk management plan for the Thames estuary for the next 100 years. The Environment Agency will make a short presentation on the key aspects and consultation arrangements of this project.

## **I. Introduction to Thames Estuary 2100**

I.1 Thames Estuary 2100 (TE 2100) is an Environment Agency (EA) initiative to develop a flood risk management plan for the tidal Thames from Teddington in the West to Sheerness in the East. 1.25 million residents and property worth £160 billion are at risk in this area. The management plan will recommend actions to manage the increasing flood risk in the estuary over the next 100 years. The current standard of protection is high, but risks are increasing due to sea level rise, climate change and development pressure.

I.2 The project aims to:

- Inform decision-making on spatial planning, flood management investment and other emerging issues in the Thames estuary.
- Reduce uncertainty concerning the future strategic direction of flood risk management.
- Safeguard future flood management opportunities in the Estuary.

I.3 The scale of climatic change is a major source of uncertainty. Therefore, the EA has identified climate change scenarios with surge tide increases for an extreme event ranging from 0.94m to 4.2m by 2100.

I.4 Four generic types of measures (High Level Options) have been developed to respond to these scenarios. They include:

- Improve the existing flood defence system.
- Maximise the benefit of the floodplains.
- A new barrier - a gated structure, which is open except when used to prevent flooding.
- A barrage - a partially closed structure changing the tidal characteristics significantly.

I.5 With regard to the use of floodplains a range of potential storage and habitat compensation sites have been identified. The planned stakeholder consultation process will provide essential feedback on the viability and acceptability of these sites as part of an integrated estuary management plan.

I.6 Interim outputs of the current work will be available in March 2008. A full draft plan will then be produced in December 2008, and the final plan is expected to be submitted to the Government in January 2010. Throughout this process there will be a range of opportunities to comment on the ongoing work.

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9 July 2007

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