

Policy Unit 5A20 Farlington Marshes**Summary description of Policy Unit**

The extensive tidal floodplain extends landward of A27 and railway networks. North of the A27 there are substantial numbers of residential, commercial and industrial properties and facilities. South of the A27 within the Wildlife Trust reserve, there are no residential properties. Existing defences are owned by the Local Authority but currently maintained by the Environment Agency. The A27 is regionally important critical infrastructure and the embankments and defences are maintained by the Highways Authority. Analysis of shoreline erosion (see Appendix C5) indicates the rate and scale of coastal processes are less within the harbours than on the open coast. Inter-tidal and transitional freshwater habitats of International, European and national nature conservation importance provide very important high tide roost and refuge sites for waders and waterfowl particularly under extreme weather and storm conditions; these habitats support the adjacent and nearby SPA/Ramsar sites. The area south of the A27 is an important Wildlife Trust and Local Nature Reserve. The footpath on top of the seawall protecting the reserve is an important recreational amenity. There is also an RSPB reserve east and south of this frontage within Langstone harbour. Archaeological features have been identified within the site and in the inter- and sub-tidal zones. This frontage has been assessed in the emerging Portchester to Emsworth Coastal Defence Strategy, which has initially proposed a HTL policy for the first 10 years whilst further detailed assessment is undertaken to determine feasibility of a MR opportunities in the medium to long term.

Final policy options

SMP1 Ref n/a

Epoch 1
From Present Day
(up to 2025)

Epoch 2
Medium Term
(2025 to 2055)

Epoch 3
Long Term
(2055 to 2105)

Hold the Line**Hold the Line *****Hold the Line ***

* indicates the potential for managed realignment of defences, subject to the outcomes of the further studies as detailed below.

In addition to a study looking across the context of the wider strategic network of sites, a study is required to confirm the future management of the site. This is likely to be a range of options from Hold the Line to Managed Realignment. This is likely to result in doing something different, to recognise coastal change. The study will address the economic, environmental and social implications and flood management issues of the site. To be reflected in the implementation plan of strategy and Action plan of the SMP. SMP, Strategy and Sustainability study are to have clear engagement plans. The SMP and Strategy will be advising the Regional Habitat Creation Programme of the likelihood of the need to provide compensatory habitat for the features and amenities of Farlington Marshes, and given the uncertain timescales this needs to be taken account of now.

Summary of rationale behind final policy options

The final policy options are consistent with the emerging Portchester Castle to Emsworth Coastal Defence Strategy and reflect a precautionary management

approach by the landowner (Portsmouth City Council) to maintain defences until further detailed studies have been concluded that determine the future management of the site.

The medium and long-term management of this site is extremely complicated often with apparently differing and conflicting environmental, economic, technical and amenity objectives.

Maintenance and improvements to the flood defences along the alignment of the A27, by the planned addition of flood gates and other minor works, will provide additional flood protection to the significant residential conurbation, railway network, commercial and industrial properties and facilities north of the A27 within the extensive tidal floodplain, and the strategically important A27 critical infrastructure itself. It is also the intention to maintain the existing defences that protect the Farlington Marsh nature reserve in the short term.

The reserve area is an Internationally, European and nationally designated site for its nature conservation habitats and internationally important numbers of wildfowl and wading birds and is a key refuge site within the Solent-wide network of high tide roost sites. It is also an important amenity and open space for the local communities. The site is owned by Portsmouth City Council and the defences are currently maintained by the Environment Agency. The reserve is managed by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The * in epochs 2 and 3 indicate that further detailed assessments are required to understand the key role that Farlington Marshes has in the Solent-wide network of wildfowl and wading bird roost and feeding sites and to determine the feasibility of managed realignment opportunities in the medium to long term. A change in defence management in the medium or longer-term may be required.

Maintenance of the flood defences, even at a lower standard of protection would provide a degree of protection to the coastal grazing marsh, freshwater and lagoon habitats within the Wildlife Trust reserve area. However, due to the environmental designations within Langstone Harbour maintenance of defence structures will continue the loss of European and national nature conservation designated habitats such as inter-tidal foreshore habitats, through coastal squeeze on the seaward side. Conversely, if defences were realigned, inter-tidal habitats could be created but would require compensation habitats and the high tide roost function to be created in advance of any managed realignment works, which may take at least 20 years. Therefore the existing defences would need to be maintained until any necessary compensation habitats were established and functioning. Within Langstone Harbour, the saltmarsh islands and sandflats that function as roost sites will become increasingly vulnerable to rising sea levels.

Losses of European and national nature conservation designated habitats such as inter-tidal foreshore habitats, through coastal squeeze, or coastal grazing marsh and freshwater reedbeds, through realignment or construction of setback defences will need to be mitigated within the same designated area or compensated for elsewhere and delivered through the Regional Habitat Creation Programme. Opportunities for habitat mitigation and compensation have been detailed within the Appropriate Assessment of the final policies.

The conclusions of the identified studies will, in conjunction with the final management recommendations of the Portchester to Emsworth CDS, inform the decision making process and consultations on the future management of the site in the medium and long-term.

Policy changes through Public Consultation

The policies proposed for consultation were HTL / HTL* / MR. The * in epoch 2 indicated that further detailed studies were required to understand the role that the Farlington Marshes has in the Solent-wide network of wildfowl and wading bird roost sites and to determine the feasibility of managed realignment opportunities in the medium to long-term.

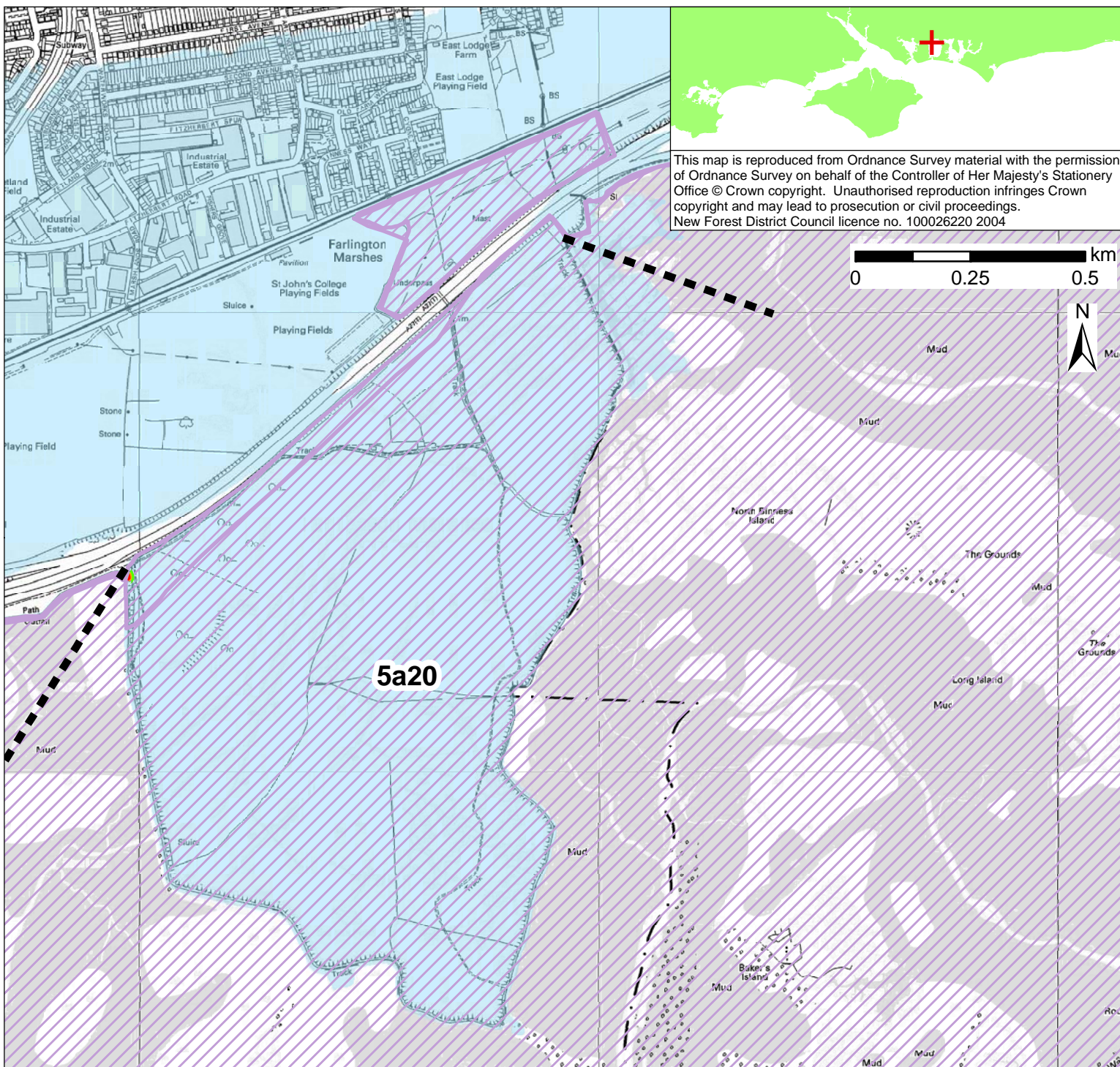
Following extensive discussions and consultation with the landowners (Portsmouth City Council), Environment Agency, Natural England, Hampshire Wildlife Trust and the Portchester to Emsworth CDS team, the HTL* in epoch 2 and MR policy in epoch 3 were amended to reflect landowner's comments and to apply a precautionary management approach until further detailed studies have been concluded to determine future defence management requirements for the site, as stated in the jointly agreed caveat to the policy options.

Funding

It is unlikely that central government funding would be secured for ongoing maintenance works of the defences around the reserve, as determined through the emerging Portchester to Emsworth Coastal Defence Strategy, although alternative sources of funding through the Highways Agency would be available for ongoing maintenance of M27/A27 defence network. Central government funding may be secured for works associated with managed realignment and habitat creation. Alternative sources of public funding may be available to Local Authority.

Further Studies (identified in Action Plan)

Conclusion and approval of Portchester to Emsworth Coastal Defence Strategy
Solent-wide network of high tide roost site study



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POLICY	From Present Day (up to 2025):	Medium-Term (2025 to 2055):	Long-Term (2055 to 2105):
	Hold the Line	Hold the Line*	Hold the Line*

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- Indicative erosion zone up to 2025
- Indicative erosion zone up to 2055
- Indicative erosion zone up to 2105
- Policy Unit Boundary
- International / National Designations
- Important Heritage Sites
- 2115 Indicative Floodplain (1 in 200 year) provided from PUSH