

**Location reference:** Black Cliff to Godrevy Point  
**Management Area reference:** MA28  
**Policy Development Zone:** PDZ10



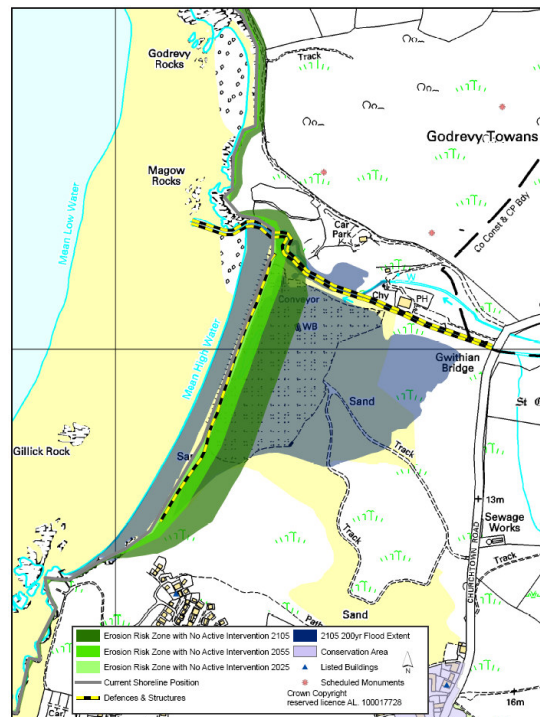
## DISCUSSION AND DETAILED POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Erosion and flood risk mapping indicates very low risk (and no assets at risk) at **Black Cliff** so no intervention would be required. No active intervention is the preferred approach. This would allow natural processes to dominate, satisfying high level objectives for the SMP. It would also support the criteria and designated features of the Gwithian to Mexico Towans SSSI.

There may some loss of dune front expected in response to sea level rise along the **Mexico to Gwithian Towans** frontage. Continued blow out development along the dune front in response to access points from the holiday parks is also likely. Whilst a non-interventional approach is preferred to accommodate the natural variability of this area and allow natural response to climate change impacts, the dunes are under pressure from existing development and infrastructure and from access through the dunes. The Cornwall Beach and Sand Dune Management Strategy concluded that some management of the dune system is required. A Managed Realignment policy is therefore proposed to support this management, and a specific Dune Management Plan should be produced to direct the delivery of this policy.

Although the dunes are anticipated to undergo erosion and rollback by up to 60m by 2105, it is possible that sufficient contemporary sources of sand and sediment exist in the nearshore zone to keep pace with rising sea levels and prevent significant roll back of the dune line occurring, at least in the short to medium term.

With predicted losses of up to 12 ha of sand dunes this is considered an area of significant coastal change and, combined with the role the dunes play in the local economy, Land Use Planners should consider identifying the entire dune area as a Coastal Change Management Area. This should review the need for, and, as necessary, facilitate any relocation of development from within the dune system



A low level realignment of the frontage which would allow natural response of the back of **Gwithian beach** and the mouth of the **Red River** to sea level rise is preferred in this location. This approach would allow the natural variability in the frontage to respond naturally to sea level rise although historically a large amount of sediment has been taken out of the system at this location due to sand mining which was actively carried out until around 2005. The managed realignment approach should take into account the objectives of the local nature reserve lying behind the sandy bund which currently delimits the position of the shoreline. The existing development centred around the Sandsifter restaurant and bar is not indicated to be in the flood or erosion risk zone (see inset

map above). It must also take account of the important archaeological sites located at Gwithian, including the scheduled Chapel and Conservation Area.

There is a cliff recession risk along the **Godrevy** frontage which will at some stage affect the current access road to the National Trust car parks located at the Godrevy headland. These car parking areas represent the largest single area of parking for vehicles in west Cornwall. The potential closure of these car parks due to loss of the cliff road access therefore represents a wider problem in this part of the county than simply loss of revenue to the National Trust. The risk is likely to be particularly acute beyond epoch 1 (2025) however the soft nature of the cliffs (unconsolidated material mixed with loose, friable slate). It is thought that the reasons for cliff failure along this frontage relates to rainfall and freshwater run-off alongside the erosive action of waves at the base of the cliffs during high tides and storms.



Despite this risk a no active intervention approach is preferred and this would sit in line with the National Trust's approach of not intervening with natural coastal processes, as set out in their Shifting Shores policy. In addition, the eroding cliffs at Godrevy are providing a source of sediment to the beach which is locally important and NAI will allow this source to be maintained. Nonetheless the potential loss of the parking remains a significant local issue and some form of realignment of the road may be considered. There are however two primary constraints to this, the first being that the Godrevy Point SSSI extends across the dunes and down to mean low water. Therefore any landward realignment of the road would impact on part of the SSSI dune habitat. Secondly, the consent and agreement of a third party landowner would be required.

Establishing alternative parking may be an important part of the solution at Godrevy. Significant parking areas are already established at Gwithian just to the south and this area is not constrained by an AONB designation, whereas the AONB would need to be considered if alternative parking were considered to the north of the current site.

The preferred plan and policy would aim to support the SMP high level objectives and those landscape objectives of the Cornwall AONB and Heritage Coast Designations. It would also support the nature conservation and scientific objectives of the Godrevy Head to St Agnes SSSI. An additional consideration however is the archaeological value attached to Godrevy. Described as a 'honey pot site' a number of important finds have been made in this area. Together with concern over the access road, it is possible this issue may instigate further investigation into the frontage and the mechanisms of cliff failure. Possible solutions such as cliff drainage and ground water management could be considered if freshwater issues were confirmed to be principle factors leading to cliff falls and slumps.

## SUMMARY OF PREFERRED PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS AND JUSTIFICATION PLAN:

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PREFERRED POLICY TO IMPLEMENT PLAN:	
<b>From present day (0-20 years)</b>	NAI at Black Cliff. NAI along Mexico to Gwithian Towans frontage. MR at Gwithian beach and Red River. NAI along Godrevy cliffs.
<b>Medium term (20-50 years)</b>	NAI at Black Cliff. NAI along Mexico to Gwithian Towans frontage. MR at Gwithian beach and Red River. NAI along Godrevy cliffs.
<b>Long term (50 -100 years)</b>	NAI at Black Cliff. NAI along Mexico to Gwithian Towans frontage. MR at Gwithian beach and Red River. NAI along Godrevy cliffs.

### SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC POLICIES

Policy Unit		SMP1 Policy	SMP2 Policy Plan			Rationale
		50 yrs	2025	2055	2105	
28.1	Black Cliff	Do nothing	NAI	NAI	NAI	Erosion and flood risk mapping indicates very low risk (and no assets at risk) so no intervention required. NAI is the preferred approach.
28.2	Mexico Towans to Gwithian Towans	Retreat the line	MR	MR	MR	A managed realignment approach is preferred to accommodate the natural variability of this area. This would allow priority to be given to enhancement of the natural dune system as a UK priority BAP Habitat.
28.3	Gwithian Beach & Red River	Hold the line	MR	MR	MR	Over the medium to longer term, re-establishing dunes would assist with national UK priority BAP habitat targets (gains in coastal sand dune habitat).
28.4	Godrevy cliffs	Do nothing	NAI	NAI	NAI	There is a high recession risk along this frontage which may affect the current access road to a local farm and the Godrevy National Trust car parks within even the very short term. Potential impacts on SSSI & AONB if realigning road.
Key: HTL - Hold the Line, A - Advance the Line, NAI – No Active Intervention MR – Managed Realignment						

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):

The management area between Black Cliff and Godrevy Point will overall implement a long-term policy of NAI across the undefended cliffs which will benefit the biodiversity and geological interests. A policy of MR will provide a mechanism for the natural functioning of Gwithian Beach, although there may be potential loss of footprint extents of the South West Coastal Path and Godrevy Headland - complex of prehistoric sites (SM). Potential loss of tourist facilities may occur along the undefended sections of coastline under NAI. Monitoring should be undertaken. The NAI and MR policies will in general support the Gwithian to Mexico Towans SSSI and the Godrevy Head to St Agnes SSSI designations.



**Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA):**

MR is proposed for the Mexico Towans to Gwithian Towans and also the Gwithian Beach and Red River frontage. These policy locations are at least 7km from the nearest Natura 2000 Site and, therefore, no direct or indirect effects are expected.

**IMPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Economics Summary		by 2025	by 2055	by 2105	Total £k PV
Property	Potential NAI Damages (£k PV)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Preferred Plan Damages (£k PV)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Benefits of preferred plan (£k PV)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Costs of Implementing plan (£k PV)	35	18	11	65
				Benefit/Cost ratio of preferred plan	N/A

**Notes**

Although no benefit, small costs required to move to the more sustainable MR policy