

# Medway Estuary and Swale Shoreline Management Plan

## Policy Unit E4 05: Cockham Wood



### Policy

From Present Day:	Medium-Term:	Long-Term:
No Active Intervention	No Active Intervention	No Active Intervention

- Indicative erosion zone up to 2025
- Indicative erosion zone up to 2055
- Indicative erosion zone up to 2105
- International Nature Conservation Designation
- 2005 Indicative floodplain © Environment Agency
- Policy Unit Boundary
- Policy Unit Extent
- Current shoreline
- Hold the Line
- Indicative realignment location
- \* actual realignment extent and location will be the subject of further studies
- National Nature Conservation Designation
- Important Heritage Sites (Scheduled Monuments)

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**Location reference:**        **Cockham Wood**

**Policy Unit reference:**    **E4 05**

### SUMMARY OF THE PLAN AND JUSTIFICATION

**Plan:**

*Undeveloped coppice at Cockham Wood extends along the shoreline and over soft clay cliffs, which are of national biological and geological importance respectively. The woodland, also designated for its landscape value, is fronted by narrow areas of grass, beach and then intertidal mudflat. The only built asset along this frontage is Cockham Wood Fort, a nationally important heritage asset, parts of which are being actively eroded by the river. The Saxon Shore Way extends along the frontage close to the shore, from Lower Upnor in the west to Hoo Marina in the east. The shoreline of this unit is not currently defended.*

*The long term policy for this unit is to maintain landscape value of the frontage by allowing the continuation of natural erosion and rollback of the shoreline. It is considered unsustainable and uneconomic to protect the heritage feature in the long term.*

**Preferred policies to implement Plan:**

**From present day:** The present day policy for Hoo Marina to Lower Upnor is to continue allowing natural processes to operate i.e. rollback of the narrow beach, under a **no active intervention** policy. This will maintain the landscape value and will result in a naturally functioning shoreline. The heritage asset will, however, continue to be exposed and actively eroded over time. It may therefore be prudent to consider additional monitoring and recording of the heritage interests.

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**Medium-term:** The medium term policy is to continue allowing natural processes to operate under a policy of **no active intervention**. The Saxon Shore Way will become inundated more often and the integrity of the heritage feature will be increasingly threatened as sea levels rise. Note that there is an alternative route to the Saxon Shore Way which extends inland along this frontage which will remain. The rising land along this frontage will limit landward migration of intertidal habitat and may ultimately lead to coastal squeeze.

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**Long-term:** The long term policy for Cockham Wood is **no active intervention**. This policy will allow the shoreline to continue to function and evolve freely, maintaining the landscape value. It is anticipated that Cockham Wood Fort and the footpath will be at increased risk from erosion during this period as sea levels rise, with the potential for eventual loss of the features. It is considered that protection of these features is not viable on economic or environmental grounds.

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**Policy Unit reference:** *E4 05*

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLAN FOR THIS LOCATION

Time Period	Management Activities	Material Assets, Infrastructure & Land Use	Landscape	Natural Environment	Historic Environment	Population (Amenity & Recreational Use and Human Health)
0-20 years	Natural erosion will continue.	Damage to / erosion of built heritage asset.	Landscape maintained.	Allows natural processes to operate along the frontage.  There is predicted to be no adverse impacts on the habitat.  The stratigraphic features of Tower Hill to Cockham Wood SSSI will continue to be exposed and work with natural processes.	Damage to / erosion of Cockham Wood Fort SM.  Potential loss of buried unknown heritage.	It will become increasingly difficult to access the foreshore route of the Saxon Shore Way as shoreline retreats naturally; however, the alternative inland route of Saxon Shore Way is not compromised.
20-50 years	Natural erosion will continue.	Damage to / erosion of built heritage asset.	Landscape maintained.	Narrowing of beach with coastal squeeze, therefore some affect on nationally important (BAP) habitat.  The stratigraphic features of Tower Hill to Cockham Wood SSSI will continue to be exposed and work with natural processes.	Damage to / erosion of Cockham Wood Fort SM.  Potential loss of buried unknown heritage.	Limited access to the foreshore route of the Saxon Shore Way. However, the alternative inland route of Saxon Shore Way is not compromised.
50-100 years	Natural erosion will continue.	Loss of built heritage asset.	Landscape maintained.	Narrowing of beach with coastal squeeze, therefore	Loss of Cockham Wood Fort SM.	Limited access to the foreshore route of the

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**IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLAN FOR THIS LOCATION**

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Management Activities</b>	<b>Material Assets, Infrastructure &amp; Land Use</b>	<b>Landscape</b>	<b>Natural Environment</b>	<b>Historic Environment</b>	<b>Population (Amenity &amp; Recreational Use and Human Health)</b>
				<p>some effect on nationally important (BAP) habitat. Initiation of cliff erosion, therefore impact on nationally designated site and nationally important (BAP) habitat.</p> <p>The stratigraphic features of Tower Hill to Cockham Wood SSSI will continue to be exposed and work with natural processes.</p>	<p>Potential loss of buried unknown heritage.</p>	<p>Saxon Shore Way. However, the alternative inland route of Saxon Shore Way is not compromised.</p>

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