



Shoreline management

Overview

As a small Island, Jersey has a long history of coastal flooding and coastal defences. This paper sets out some of the previous investigations and actions, along with details of the Shoreline Management Plan and subsequent actions.



Introduction

The effects of the tide and rising sea levels have been an issue that the people of Jersey – and indeed the States Assembly, have historically faced due to the large tidal range of Jersey’s coast. This paper details some of the historic defences and the investigations from 1990 onwards, before looking at the Shoreline Management Plan published in 2020 and some of its impacts on development of Island policy.

Historical Defences

Samares and the Dicq

One of the earliest examples of these concerns can be found in the States Assembly minutes from 1623 in which Phillip Dumaresq noted that carts going over “Les Mielles de Samares” were disturbing the sand to such an extent that there was a risk of flooding in the event of a large enough tide. No formal defences were built to prevent this at the time, instead it was suggested that “Mr. Lieutenant Baillif and some of the Gentlemen of Justice and the Officers of the King” would create defined paths to prevent further disturbing of the sand.

Actions in the area continued into 1717 when the Assembly agreed that a dyke should be erected to “serve as a defence against the sea” causing a wall to be erected of “two hundred and fifty feet of trees of ten to twelve feet in length each”¹.

The physical Dicq is no longer there (though the area retains the name), however it is recorded that during the Great Storm of 1811, when a very high tide combined with storm force winds

¹<https://collections.societe.je/archive/books/actes-des-etats/actes-des-etats-1701-1779/1999318?q=dicq>

caused widespread flooding along the south-eastern coast of the Island, the Dicq prevented a breakthrough that would have flooded over 4,000 vergées of land around Samares, Les Marais and the Valley of Longueville².



The Dicq photographed in 1853.

Sea Walls

Not all shoreline defences have been as successful as the Dicq. For example in the late 15th century, a sea wall (usually referred to as the “Town Wall”) was constructed some sixteen feet south of the Town Church’s perimeter wall. This wall provided only limited protection as during high spring tides waves would ride over the structure and reach the churchyard walls.³

Later sea walls would prove more resilient, including several walls which were built during the fortification of the Island against French invasion in the late 1700s, forming part of the same network that contained the Martello towers. These structures were maintained for both defence and protection from the sea.

In the late 1820s, construction began on the town’s new artificial sea wall, to be called “Esplanade.” When it was finished in 1832, the new Esplanade created several acres of commercial land conveniently located adjacent to the new harbour, creating an entirely man-made waterfront.⁴

The construction of walls on certain areas of the coast primarily as military defences also continued, the majority of Jersey’s current sea defences having been constructed during the

² https://www.jerripedia.org/wiki/Coast:_The_Dicq

³ <https://www.gov.je/sitecollectiondocuments/planning%20and%20building/sthelierurbancharacter%20%20evolutionofcharacter.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.gov.je/sitecollectiondocuments/planning%20and%20building/sthelierurbancharacter%20%20evolutionofcharacter.pdf>

German occupation of the island in the Second World War. What is now used for sea defence was built as military defence structures with the goal of providing defence to the Island. Following the occupation, these walls were kept and maintained as a sea defence. Maintaining the existing walls was to the benefit of the Island due to the cost to the cost to install “these kinds of defences, particularly with the rise in sea levels,” being “tens of millions of pounds” as [stated](#) by Connétable Crowcroft.



Before the Shoreline Management Plan

This section provides a brief timeline of work undertaken in relation to the Island’s sea defences. Following major storms in the 1990’s, the Public Services Committee committed to undertake work on the condition and remaining life expectancy of the Island’s sea defences.

- A detailed report was produced for States consideration in April 1996, advising that Fauvic Bay, Anne Port Bay, St Brelade’s Bay and St Ouen’s Bay needed immediate attention.
- An extensive data gathering process was carried out during 1997, 1998 and 1999 which aimed to establish the coastal movements around the Island which affected Sea Defences. On completion of the field studies, the data was used to produce a coastal model, which simulated coastal processes.
- In September 2001, the Public Services Committee was informed that in order to meet long term visions regarding the Sea Defences in the Department’s Strategic Plan 2001 – 2006, it would be necessary to bring forward a Sea Defence Strategy which would provide effective sea defences for the foreseeable future with initial indications that investment in excess of £10 million would be required in order to repair and maintain the Island’s sea defences.
- The Planning & Environment Committee, at its meeting of 22nd November 2001 received a report advising of the continued maintenance option mentioned above and the effect of taking an alternative “managed retreat” option which would involve the loss of land to 200 metres inshore. It was also noted that a comprehensive survey of St Ouen’s Bay had recommended revetment (rock armour), however, this had been dispelled due to the dramatic effect it would have on the bay and beach users.
- In April 2002, consultants produced a report entitled “Coastal Defence Asset Management Assessment – Jersey”. The report contained recommendations for prioritised coastal defence works and associated estimated costs.



- In April 2007, consultants produced a report entitled “[Climate Change Jersey: Effects on Coastal Defences](#)”. The report concluded that the major risks to people and property around Jersey’s coastline arise from flooding where the existing seawalls, while presently providing a good standard of defence, could suffer from more frequent and more intense overtopping in the future. The report noted that existing defences would need to be improved in an adaptive manner over the coming decades to cope with this threat.
- Following a major storm in 2008, all available funding was spent on repairing the walls damaged by the storm.
- In December 2009, consultants produced a report entitled “Seawall review, Jersey – The Effects of Climate Change on Jersey’s Coastal Defence Structures”. The report contained recommendations for prioritised coastal defence works and associated estimated costs. Whilst the 2002 report focused on structural condition, this report utilised a multi-criteria assessment to develop the programme of recommended work.
- Following a sustained period of significant storms in 2014, all available funding was spent on repairing the walls damaged by the storms.
- In 2015 the Technical and Transport Services department issued a [Periodic Update to the Sea Defence Strategy](#) which sought to look at the necessary actions required in 2015 and beyond.

The Shoreline Management Plan

On May 2nd, 2019 the States voted to accept a proposition entitled Climate Change Emergency: Actions to be taken by the Government of Jersey ([P.27/2019](#)), brought by Deputy Rob Ward, and consequently declared a Climate Emergency. This declaration paved the way for policies, plans, and roadmaps highlighting not just how Jersey would reach net zero but also how Jersey would protect its coastline as sea levels rise.

Due to ongoing tidal erosion and rising sea levels posing a high risk to many parts of Jersey, the [Shoreline Management Plan](#) (SMP) was published in 2020 in order to put in place a framework on how the effects of climate change could be mitigated. This was a change to the prior approach to combating rising sea levels and tidal erosion which was to maintain any current sea defences and act on a reactive basis to flooding events as and when they occurred.

The SMP sets out the necessary actions for 36 Coastal Management Units (CMU), with a phased approach that will last until 2120.

Alongside these 36 CMUs, the SMP highlighted 8 key areas that needed improved sea defences to prevent detrimental effects of climate change and tidal erosion, these are –

- Havre Des Pas
- St Aubin's Harbour
- St Aubin's Bay (First Tower to West Park)
- Greve D'Azette



- Le Hocq/Pontac
- St Aubin's Bay (La Haule to First Tower)
- Royal Bay of Grouville
- St Brelade's Bay

These 8 areas were chosen as priorities due to the flood risk that they posed, and the resulting damage that would occur following a significant flood. In total, across the 8 areas, nearly 400 properties would be affected if no work was done to mitigate the increased risk of flood brought by climate change.

The most common piece of climate resilient infrastructure that is mentioned across the 8 priority areas is the construction and improvement of sea defences. To demonstrate the work that will be undertaken on costal defences throughout the lifecycle of the plan, the SMP provides 4 types of costal management policies against which decisions are assessed –

No Active Intervention (NAI)

No action is taken under this stage, and the shoreline is allowed to "evolve without intervention." Areas with costal defences are rarely in this category

Maintain the Defence Line (MTDL)

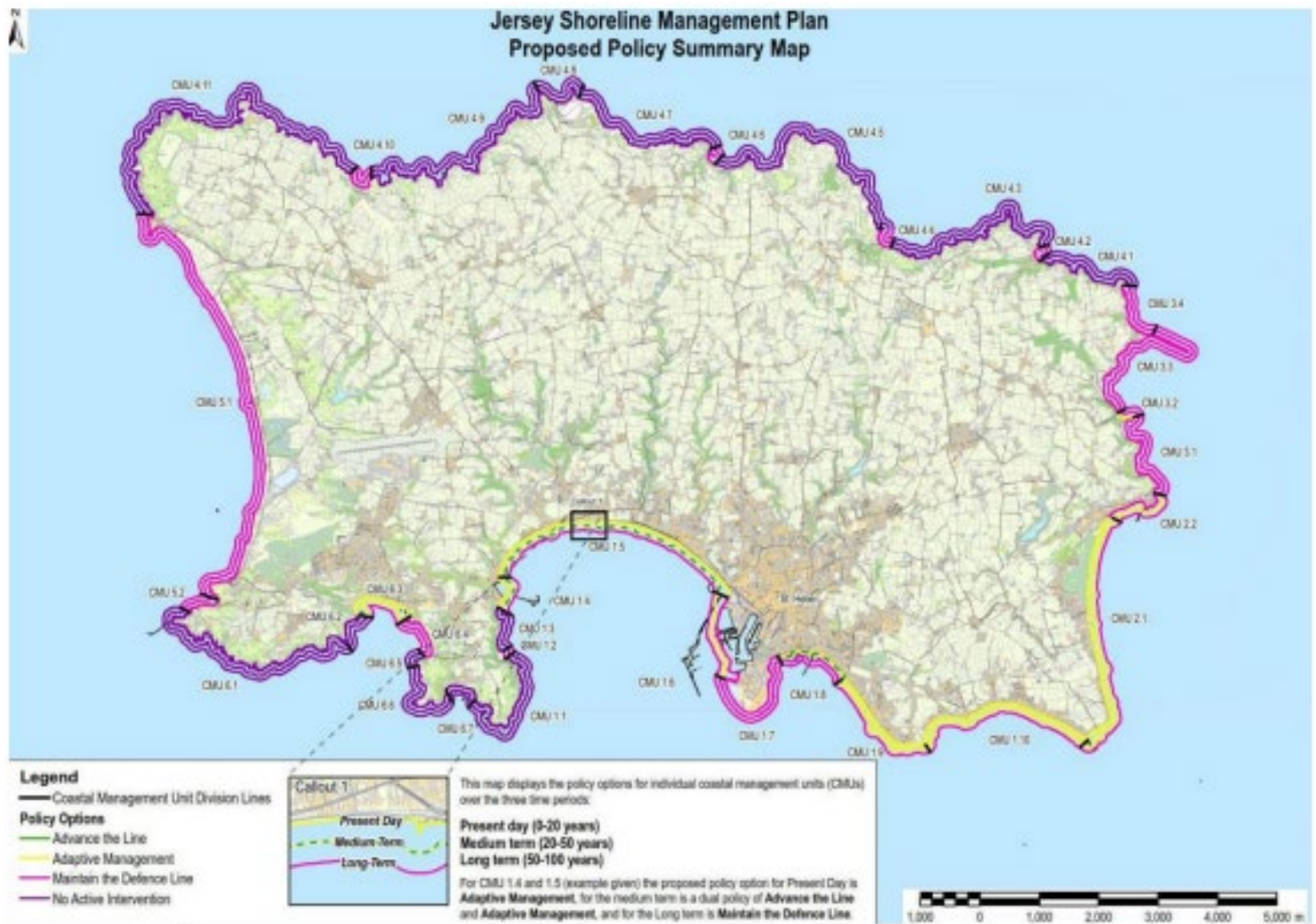
This involves the maintenance of the current costal defences and is for areas where the current defences are adequate protection against climate change and tidal erosion.

Adaptive Management (AM)

This is proactive management of the coastline and could include improvement of current defences, building new defences, or even raising awareness of flood risk in areas where people would be affected.

Advance the Line (ATL)

At this stage new defences are built further out than any existing defences. This is a worst-case scenario and is implemented in areas where this significant risk of tidal erosion or floods from climate change.



Although the potential impact of each policy option has been considered at each location around the Island, No Active Intervention has generally been selected where there are no existing coastal defences. It is the stated intention of the Government to maintain all existing coastal defences as a minimum.

The SMP assesses each CMU in detail, identifying key features and risks in a full table before reviewing each area in more detail –



Table 4-1: Coastal Management Area 1 - South Coast

Coastal Management Unit (Approximate Length)		Existing Infrastructure (Approximate length)	Key Characteristics	Subject to Flooding	Subject to Erosion
1.1	Noirmont Common (3900m)	Undefended	- Natural coastal habitat - Forms key coastal heathland habitat, linking to Portelet Common (CMU6.6) - Noirmont Common Ecological SSI, listed within the Biodiversity Strategy for Jersey	X	✓
1.2	Belcroute Bay (170m)	Vertical granite seawall; 100m	Noirmont Manor heritage site and Grade III listed building	X	✓
1.3	La Housse (1100m)	Vertical masonry wall; 100m	Natural coastline, Belcroute Geological SSI	X	✓
1.4	St Aubin's Harbour (2750m)	Vertical granite seawall; 700m	- Key leisure and fishing harbour - Nine listed buildings with cultural and heritage value	✓	X

Extract Table 4-1 – SMP P22

4.1 Coastal Management Unit 1.1 (Noirmont Common)

Preferred Policy Option		
Epoch 1: Present Day 2020-2040	Epoch 2: Medium Term 2040-2070	Epoch 3: Long Term 2070-2120
No Active Intervention	No Active Intervention	No Active Intervention

Coastal Management Unit 1.1 (Noirmont Common) spans from the eastern end of Portelet Beach to the northern end of Noirmont Common. Though the unit is undefended, there is negligible flood and coastal erosion risk and no properties or critical infrastructure assets are at risk. The policy options considered in CMU 1.1 are scored against the objectives in Appendix C (Table 4-1). The preferred policy option for this unit is **No Active Intervention** for all three epochs.



Finally the SMP also sets out the next steps and recommendations necessary to implement the plan –

Subject	Recommendations	Provisional Implementation Programme
Implementation of the SMP	1. Implement the SMP policies for epoch 1.	Programme for Adaptive Management policies in epoch 1 - within one year.
	2. Development of a flood management scheme for St Helier (CMU1.6), to be implemented in epoch 2. This will support the management intent of Adaptive Management, and will be designed to consider both coastal and inland flood risk (pluvial).	Within 10 years.
	a. Feasibility Study of alignment options, review and map infrastructure and environmental constraints. This should be undertaken alongside Economic Assessment task 5 i.e. engaging stakeholders and potential beneficiaries.	Within 10 – 15 years.
	b. Scheme development – full option appraisal of alignment options to identify and development preferred scheme.	Within 10 – 15 years.
Baseline Process Understanding	1. Develop a coastal monitoring programme.	Within two years.
	a. Undertake beach monitoring to establish reference baseline surveys for annual monitoring according to recognised standards / best practice. Compare with previous surveys and analysis undertaken.	Within one year and annual surveys.
	b. Periodic review and analysis of measured water levels for climate change monitoring.	At SMP review and scheme development
	c. Create 'extreme weather database' to record meteorological and sea conditions prior to, during and after storm events. Observations should include photos, videos, and measurements of change against known features. Must include beach observations. Subject to identification of resources.	Within one year
	d. Aerial photos and DTMs acquired from annual island survey are reviewed for evidence of erosion, supported by site observations (photographs and notes recorded). Observations via routine structural	At SMP review and scheme development



	inspections and any reported / observed displacement of cliff material as a result of storms and / or heavy rainfall.	
	2. Integrated catchment model of surface water and sub-surface water. This would update the findings of the SMP on pluvial flooding and provide a record and review of capacity of existing Surface Water piped network.	Within three years.
	3. Develop a Catchment Flood Management Plan. This can cover the whole island and/or selected, key catchments identified by the SMP to contribute to existing and predicted inland flooding. Extreme rainfall analysis should be revisited when historic daily rainfall data (2004 to 2014 and pre-1983) at Jersey Airport becomes available.	Within five years.
Economic Assessment	1. Detailed appraisal of the schemes for each of the priority areas, to refine the costs of schemes and further develop the business case for funding and implementation of the plan. This will include a more comprehensive assessment of the risks and deliverability of the schemes, as well as a greater confidence and refinement of the whole life maintenance costs.	As directed by the Programme (developed in 1. of the SMP Implementation)
	2. Develop the assessment of indirect flood damages by carrying out quantitative assessments of damages associated with critical infrastructure, tourism and recreation.	Within one year.
	3. Undertake a detailed GVA assessment to fully understand the potential business disruption caused by flooding in St Helier, showing the benefits of SMP implementation to the local economy.	Within two years.
	4. Assess the potential breach risks at key locations on the Island to develop a detailed business case for schemes.	Within one year.
	5. Explore sources for funding contributions, negotiating with potential partners and beneficiaries to of the plan.	Within one year.
Policy Framework Review	1. Review the current legislative framework which the SMP will support, for example the Island Plan and drainage laws for Jersey.	Immediately
	2. Integrate management policies for the SMP into Island Plan Review and the revised planning policy byelaws.	Immediately

Since the Shoreline Management Plan

Bridging Island Plan

The SMP details the policies from the Island Plan 2011 which were relevant to the SMP development. Further to the publication of the SMP the [Bridging Island Plan](#) (BIP) was approved



by the Assembly in March 2022. Whilst the policies within the BIP are very similar to the previous iteration, it is worth acknowledging the development of policy between the plans. Those less relevant to the Shoreline have been omitted –

Island Plan 2011		Bridging Island Plan	
Policy	Description	Policy	Description
SP 4	Protecting the Natural and Historic Environment – including Jersey’s biodiversity and heritage assets (archaeology, historic buildings, structures and places).	SP 5	Protecting and improving the natural environment – natural environment, landscapes, coastline, seascapes, biodiversity, and geodiversity
SP 5	Economic Growth and Diversification – protecting employment land and development opportunities for new and existing employment.	SP 6	Sustainable island economy - creation and maintenance of a sustainable, productive and diverse economy, with support for new and existing businesses, particularly where they encourage the development of a local market for goods and services
NE 1	Conservation and Enhancement of Biological Diversity – encouraging opportunities to conserve wildlife.	NE 1	Protection and improvement of biodiversity and geodiversity -Development must protect or improve biodiversity and geodiversity.
NE 6	Coastal National Park – highest level of protection from development, encouraging conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.	NE 3	Landscape and seascape charter – highest level of protection from development, encouraging conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.
NE 8	Access and Awareness – encouraging and enhancing access to and awareness of the coast and countryside.	CI 9	Countryside access and awareness - encourage and enhance public access to the coast and the countryside
HE 1	Protecting Listed Buildings and Places – preservation of the architectural and historic character and integrity of Listed buildings and places, and their settings.	HE 1	Protecting listed building and places, and their settings – protection of special interests, improvement of significance of listed buildings and places.
SCO 4	Protection of Open Space – protecting existing open space provision.	CI 7	Protected open space – protecting open space provision.



In addition to the above, the BIP sets out a policy response to the Shoreline Management Plan, key elements of which are detailed below -

Strategic Proposal 3 – Creating a marine spatial plan for Jersey

Jersey's planning system extends to the marine environment, and the BIP includes a policy regime that responds to known and potential future developments related to a range of activities such as offshore utility scale renewable energy development, aquaculture and shoreline management. The BIP also seeks to ensure that the impact of development on areas of high marine biodiversity and seascape value is given significant weight in the decision-making process and creates a new Protected Coastal Area to best regulate and limit development of the unique intertidal zones and offshore reefs.

Concept statement – prepare Town to adapt to and mitigate climate change

The BIP includes policies designed to make Town more resilient to the effects of sea level rise and wave overtopping. The SMP already prioritises the need for action to be taken in the short-to medium-term, both to the west of Town in St Aubin's Bay, and to the east at Havre des Pas. An 'advance-the-line' response in both areas is proposed, which could involve the creation of new sea defences, but may also provide opportunities for other forms of development to bring improvements in these areas.

There are a number of policies throughout the Island Plan that will help to prepare Town, such as those which ensure that new development considers and adapts in response to flood risk, whilst also enabling the delivery of essential shoreline management plan schemes.

The **PROTECT TOWN** concept statement is reflected in a range of detailed policies and proposals, including the following:

- Policy GD6 – Design quality
- Policy HE1 – Protecting listed buildings and places, and their settings
- Policy HE3 – Protection or improvement of conservation areas
- Policy HE5 – Conservation of archaeology
- Proposal 15 – Conservation area designation

Development along coastal flood defences, the coastline and watercourses

Coastal flooding and sea defences

This section provides a comprehensive explanation of the SMP and includes proposals for necessary proposals and policies relating to flood preparation and defence.



Proposal 34 – Catchment Flood Management Plan

The Minister for the Environment will work with the Minister for Infrastructure to further explore opportunities for the strategic management of inland flooding in the form of a catchment flood management plan (CFMP).

The CFMP should consider all types of inland flooding including surface water, watercourse and reservoir-related, and include the likely impacts of climate change, the effects of how we use and manage the land, and how we can sustainably develop land in the future.

Proposal 35 – Coastline and watercourse buffers

The Minister for the Environment will work with the Minister for Infrastructure to develop supplementary planning guidance to define and establish an appropriate width and characterisation of buffer-strip alongside areas of coastline, coastal defences and watercourses, which will be used to support the implementation of flood risk policies.

Policy WER3 – Flood infrastructure

Development within close proximity to a coastal sea defence, the coastline or watercourse will only be supported in such cases where the development has been proven to be appropriate and necessary, and will not otherwise prevent the effective operation, maintenance and/or extension of:

1. a coastal sea defence or be vulnerable to coastal erosion in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan; or
2. a designated watercourse or other flood defence.

Proposals for new or replacement coastal defence schemes will be supported where they are consistent with the management approach for the coastline presented in the Jersey Shoreline Management Plan; meet the required specification in order to be able to provide mitigation against flood risk; and where the environmental impact of the development has been appropriately considered and, where necessary, mitigated or compensated.

Havre des Pas Coastal Flood Alleviation Scheme

On the 7th of July 2025, a public consultation was opened regarding the plans to protect Havre des Pas, as outlined as necessary in the SMP, and the surrounding areas against flooding and tidal erosion for the next 100 years.

In launching the consultation, the Government stated that it believed the best way forward for the Havre des Pas coastline was to Advance the Line. The proposed scheme is “the largest coastal defences project undertaken in Jersey since the 1800's.”



The works are planned to stretch from La Collette all the way along the coast to La Grande Charrière Slipway, next to the Rice Bowl Restaurant.

This is broken into 4 zones, which will split the work accordingly. The first phase has yet to have a start date announced but will start at La Collette.

The consultation closed on 12th September 2025, and the results will be published in the form of a 2025 Public Consultation Report.