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Roach and Crouch Flood Management Strategy Consultation

August 2003



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The Environment Agency is the leading public body protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales.

It's our job to make sure that air, land and water are looked after by everyone in today's society, so that tomorrow's generations inherit a cleaner, healthier world.

Our work includes tackling flooding and pollution incidents, reducing industry's impacts on the environment, cleaning up rivers, coastal waters and contaminated land, and improving wildlife habitats.

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Background

The Environment Agency aims to promote flood management schemes, enhance the natural environment and regenerate coastal habitat within the Roach and Crouch estuaries, in Essex (see Figure 1).

This aim will be accomplished by developing a long-term broad brush plan, known as a flood management strategy. The strategy will consider the impact of the existing flood defences on the natural development of the whole estuary system and will also set out the options for efficient management of the estuary flood defences over the next 50 years.

The Roach and Crouch Flood Management Strategy is nearing completion and consultation on the flood management proposals with the general public and interested organisations have begun. The flood management proposals have been based on the strategic objectives listed on page 2.



Figure 1 Study Area

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Strategic objectives

These objectives, or targets, detail the issues which have been considered when preparing the strategy.

The primary strategic objectives of the study are to:

- **Provide a flood management strategy** that supports the long-term objectives of protecting people's lives and property, whilst developing a more sustainable estuary shape;
- **Enhance saltmarsh generation;**
- **Avoid pollution of controlled water;**
- **Ensure compliance with the Conservation Regulations;**
- **Maintain or enhance environmentally designated sites** habitats and species;
- **Maintain access to the sea for all vessels.**

The secondary strategic objectives of the study are to:

- **Maintain the extent and distribution of habitats that support the fish and shellfish populations;**
- **Where necessary, re-route and create Public Rights of Way;**
- **Enhance or protect socio-economic assets, significant visitor attractions and recreational resources;**
- **Protect scheduled monuments and listed buildings;**
- **Maintain or enhance the existing landscape.**

The options available to achieve these objectives are shown on the next page.

Flood management policy and strategic options

The flood management policies for the strategy are Hold the Line, Advance the Line, Managed Realignment, Limited Intervention and Do Nothing.

The following section describes each flood management policy.

Policy A: Hold the Line

This involves maintaining the existing flood defences and control structures in their present positions and increasing the standard of protection against flooding in some areas.

Policy B: Managed Realignment

The policy of managed realignment involves the placement of a new managed realignment scheme landward of the existing flood defences. This policy would be achieved through the partial or complete removal of the existing flood defences. This policy would be gradually implemented and regularly monitored in order to study any potential effects on the overall estuary shape.

Policy C: Advance the Line

This policy involves the construction of a new flood management scheme in front of existing flood defences.

Policy D: Limited Intervention

This policy involves a limited amount of maintenance.

Policy E: Do Nothing / No Environment Agency Maintenance

There would be no further active intervention by the Environment Agency. Without intervention the defences would eventually fail and areas currently protected from flooding would no longer be protected. This would happen gradually over a long period of time.

How was the flood management strategy developed?

The initial stage of the flood management strategy was to define the present and future risk of flooding to the land adjacent to the River Roach and River Crouch.

The second stage was to define the existing human and natural environment (assets) that would be susceptible to flooding, should any of the existing flood defences fail, either now or in the future.

Environmental issues

The existing human and natural environment within the Roach and Crouch study area has been identified in a baseline Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

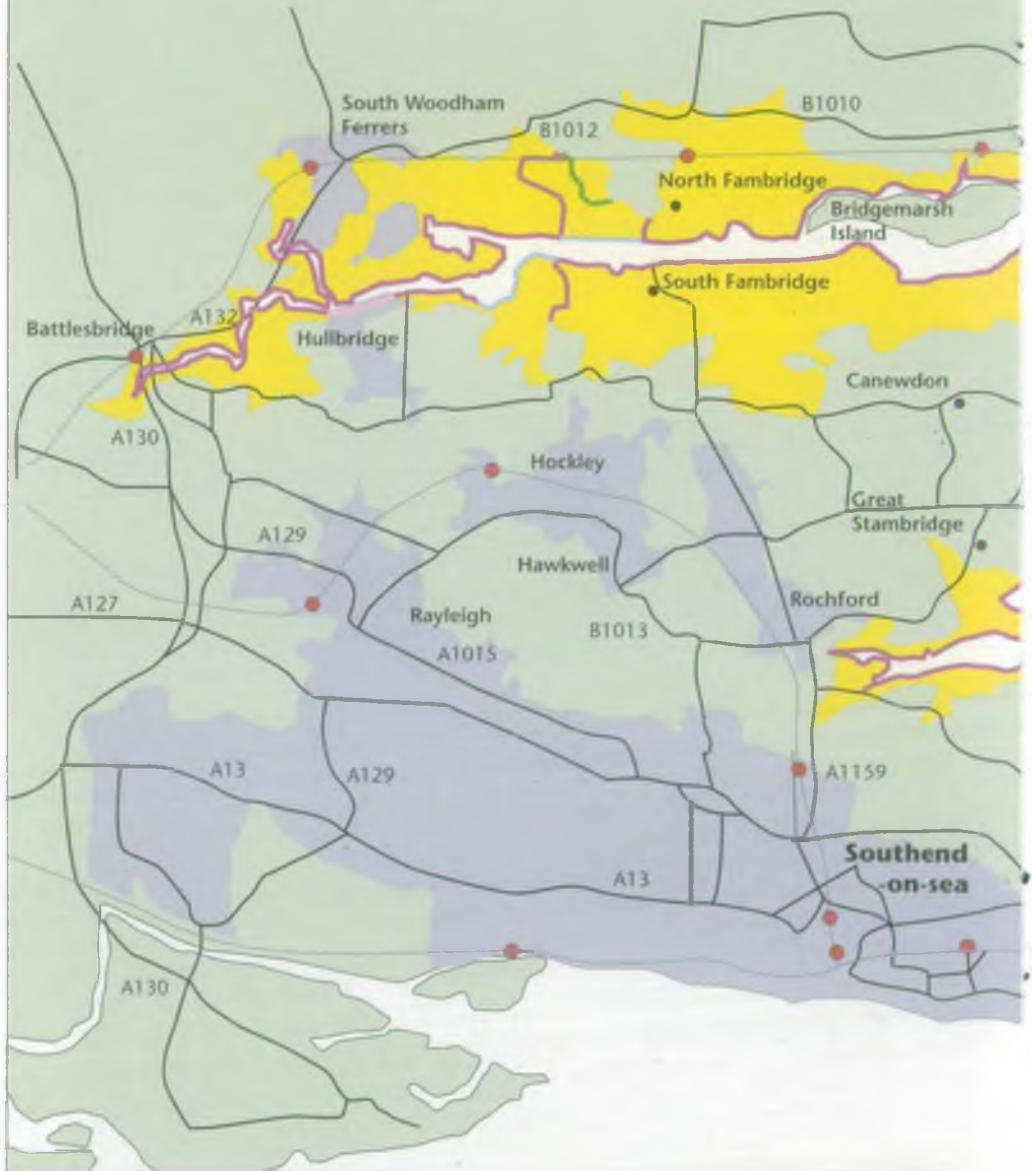
The baseline SEA provides information on the existing environmental conditions, lists the key concerns of stakeholders and defines environmental objectives for each component of the environment (e.g. nature conservation, land use).

This information has been used to identify issues in terms of how the estuary is managed in the future and more importantly will be used to identify how each of the possible flood management options will affect the present and future characteristics of the study area.

Technical issues

Recent studies have shown that man-made changes, notably land reclamation and the implementation of flood management schemes, have had a significant impact on the

Preferred flood management options 2054



present shape of the Roach and Crouch estuary, and have caused in these estuaries to become a single system.

This has led to a more controlled estuary channel and further modification could cause the failure of the existing flood defences. The aim of the Strategy is to determine a more sustainable estuary shape.

Social and economic issues

The Environment Agency is funded by national and local government. The development of flood management schemes must meet the rules set by the Treasury and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

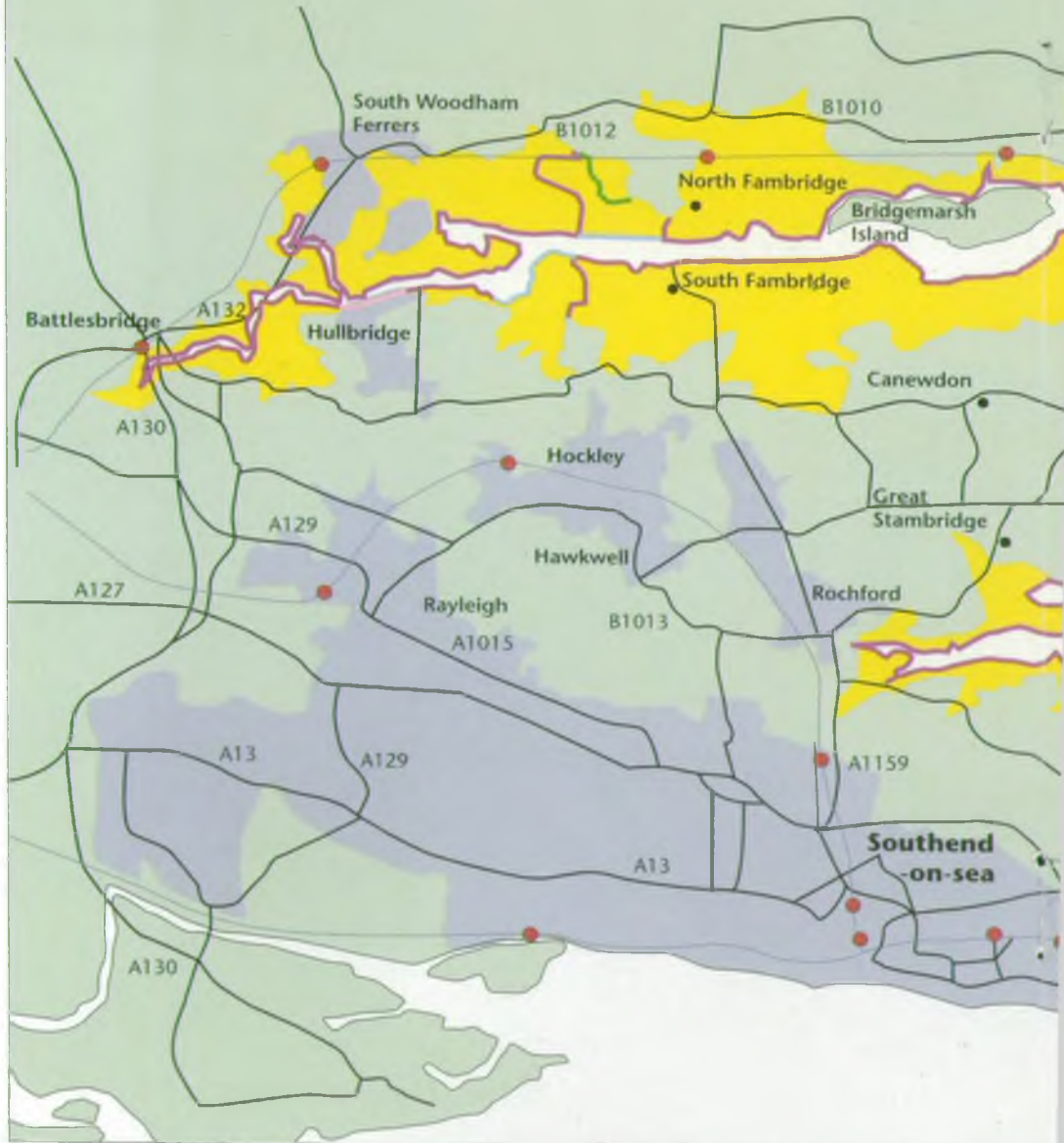
The assets identified within the Roach and Crouch estuary complex include residential, commercial and industrial properties, farmland, recreational land and grass land. In order to calculate the potential cost of flood damage associated with each flood management option, a computational model has been developed to carry out flood simulation modelling within the Roach and Crouch estuary complex.

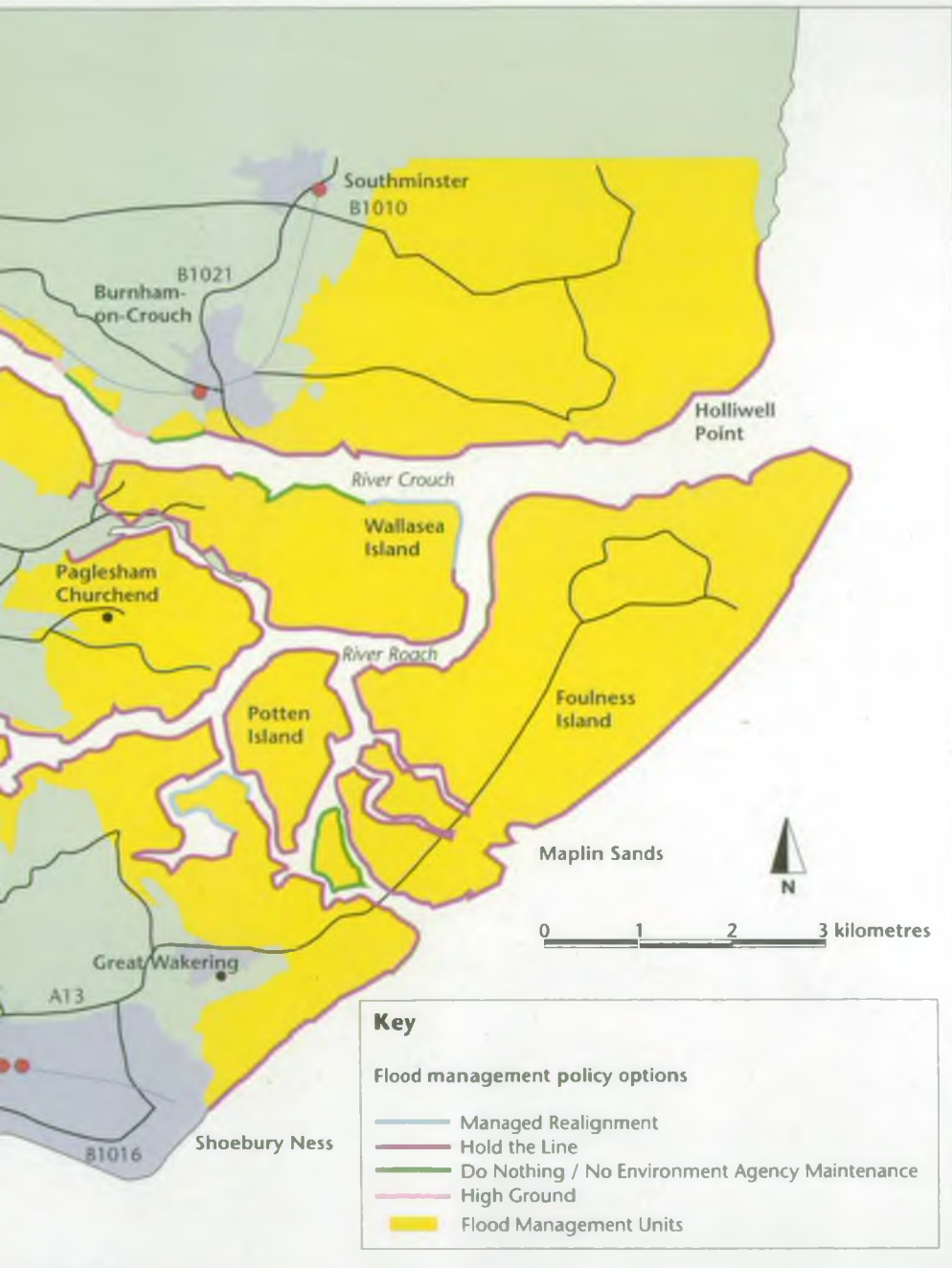
Preferred flood management options maps

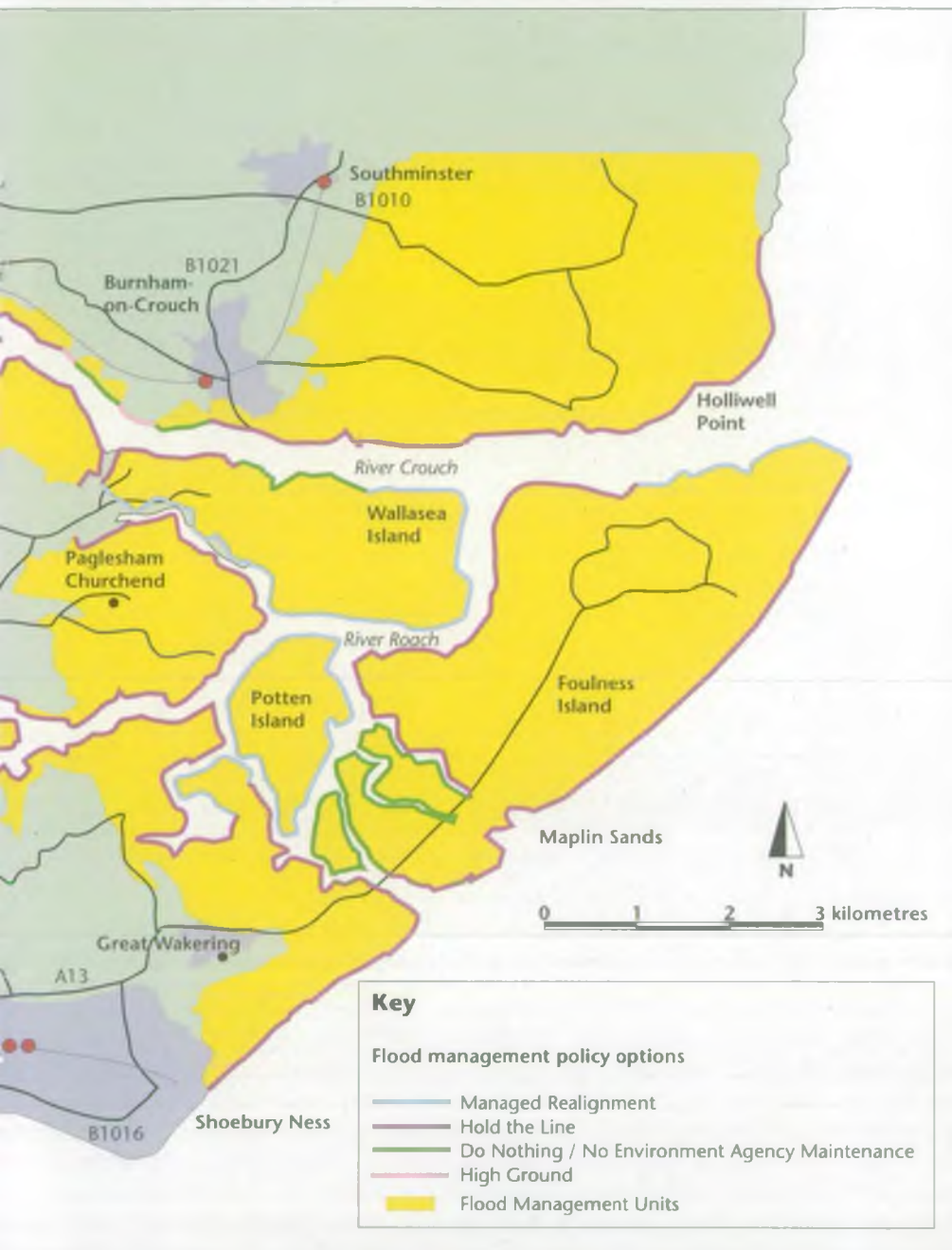
The maps on the following pages indicate the draft preferred flood management options for the Roach and Crouch estuary.

The first, a map for 2009, indicates the preferred options for the next 5 years. The second, a map for 2054, indicates the preferred options that may be in place in 50 years time.

Preferred flood management options 2009







How will the strategy be put into practice?

Following the publication of the Strategy report, it is likely that more detailed studies and monitoring will be required to confirm the detail of the final options for individual flood compartments. This is because the strategy considers issues at a broad brush estuary level rather than at a detailed local level.

Detailed scheme appraisals will be undertaken to determine both strategically and locally that options are technically feasible, environmentally acceptable and economically viable. All economic decisions will be based on current Government investment criteria, any change in criteria will be reflected in any future evaluation of flood compartments. Only following this further detailed investigation can options be carried out on the ground, subject to gaining all necessary consents.

Implementation of options on the ground will be phased over a number of years. Also, it is planned to review the Strategy on a five year cycle to ensure that each flood management decision is made using the best available information at the time.

What is happening next?

The following table describes the timetable from now until the final report is published.

Table 1 | Outline of programme

Stage in programme	Date
● Consultation booklet	August 2003
● Public exhibitions at Rochford, Battlesbridge and Burnham-on-Crouch	September 2003
● Deadline for comments	14 November 2003
● Publication of the final Roach and Crouch Flood Management Strategy	Early 2004

Where are these Public Exhibitions and what will be there?

The public exhibitions will be held at the following locations:

- 15th September 2003, Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford.
- 16th September 2003, Council Chamber, Burnham on Crouch Town Council, Chapel Road, Burnham on Crouch
- 17th September 2003, Hawk Hill Church, Hawk Hill, Battlesbridge

All exhibitions will start at 1pm and close at 8pm

The public exhibitions will include an informal display of the draft results of the strategy. Display boards will include maps of the Roach and Crouch with the proposed management strategy for each part of the river frontage.

There will be an opportunity to discuss individual concerns with the Environment Agency and Halcrow (consultant) staff.

Consultation contact

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