

HAYLING ISLAND COASTAL STRATEGY DELAYS – JUNE 2022

WE ARE becoming increasingly concerned with the unacceptable delay in the initial draft of the Hayling Island Coastal Strategy, and whether, and when, it is produced will have kept up with the increasing flood risks to the Island.

This Strategy has been in production for over two years now, and is the responsibility of Coastal Partners, who work for HBC. It is based on the Environment Agency tidal prediction of 1.4mtr rise out to 2100. This forecast was produced four years ago, and will probably not be updated for another four years. In the interim we have witnessed the failure of COP26, and the UN statement that the 1.5° C Global Warming Target (on which the 1.4mtr tide rise is based) is unlikely to be met, and 2° C is more likely. (And the Met Office has issued a recent statement stating that there is a 50:50 probability that one year in the next five will exceed the 1.5° C ceiling.)

We certainly expect that the initial Strategy draft will provide a view on the range of likely flood risks against the latest forecasts and estimates. If it just uses historic data, the recommendations made will not be credible and may lead to inappropriate sea defence proposals being made.

As part of their Coastal Strategy, Coastal Partners are making a major issue of the requirement to maintain and increase the areas of inter-tidal habitat around our coast as recompense for the encroachment of hard defences implemented across the Solent. The nearest example is the flooding of Southmoor Field at Langstone. We would not agree with giving up new areas of Hayling to the sea without first implementing a plan to reconstruct the vast areas of saltmarsh in our two harbours which have been destroyed through disease and pollution, which reduced almost all of it to mud flats covered in green algae slime. Adding to this problem makes no sense.

Historic England have recently published a portfolio of RAF aerial photographs taken in 1950 on www.historicengland.org.uk. You can see that the attached composite extract from the RAF photos of the north of the Island from the old bridges to the Emsworth Channel shows the extent of the marshes that were covered in grasses at the time. This area was an extensive and important wildlife habitat which has now been destroyed. It also acted as the frontline defence against coastal erosion. It's worth remembering that these marshes survived the oil pollution of WWII. A similar situation of disappeared saltmarshes also exists throughout Langstone & Chichester Harbours down to the two entrances.

We know Coastal Partners recognise this issue as they are looking at replanting an area of mud in front of the Royal Oak as part of the Langstone Village defence project.

We will ask that the Coastal Partners' plan addresses the long-term protection of our seafront and provides a sustainable strategy to protect our Island's infrastructure and road networks.

Dave Parham
Save Our Island Group

