

7 MANAGING CUMBRIA'S COAST

- 7.1 Cumbria's coast and ecosystems are faced with many problems such as pollution, coastal erosion, climate change and development pressures for a variety of uses.
- 7.2 Not all of these are matters that can be controlled through land use planning. Partnership working and management plans have a key role. Coastal Zone Management Partnerships and Plans have been produced for Cumbria's three major estuaries, Morecambe Bay, the Duddon, and the Solway. Schemes of Management have been or are being prepared for the designated European Marine Sites in Morecambe Bay, the Upper Solway Firth and the Duddon Estuary and for the St Bees Heritage Coast. Management Plans for the two coastal AONBs have been agreed. In addition Shoreline Management Plans for the whole of the Cumbria coast have been completed. Coastal matters are covered in the Lake District National Park Management Plan. The Lake District National Park Section 3 Conservation Map identifies semi-natural habitats which contribute to the coast's landscape and wildlife. These are considered to be areas of natural beauty particularly important to conserve.

Coastal Development

- 7.3 The majority of Cumbria's coast is rural, but there are significant urban and industrialised areas, including Barrow In Furness, the main towns of West Cumbria and the nuclear complex at Sellafield. Many of these owe their origin to their coastal location. Port, harbour and resort economies have experienced significant decline leaving the economy of these areas fragile and their location remote from modern markets and communication networks. Recreation and tourism have an important role along both rural and urban stretches of the coast.



The Coast provides a valuable recreation role, St Bees Heritage Coast.

7.4 Within the coastal zone Policy CZ1 of Regional Planning Guidance requires the definition of developed and undeveloped areas of coast. This assessment is shown in Figure 9.

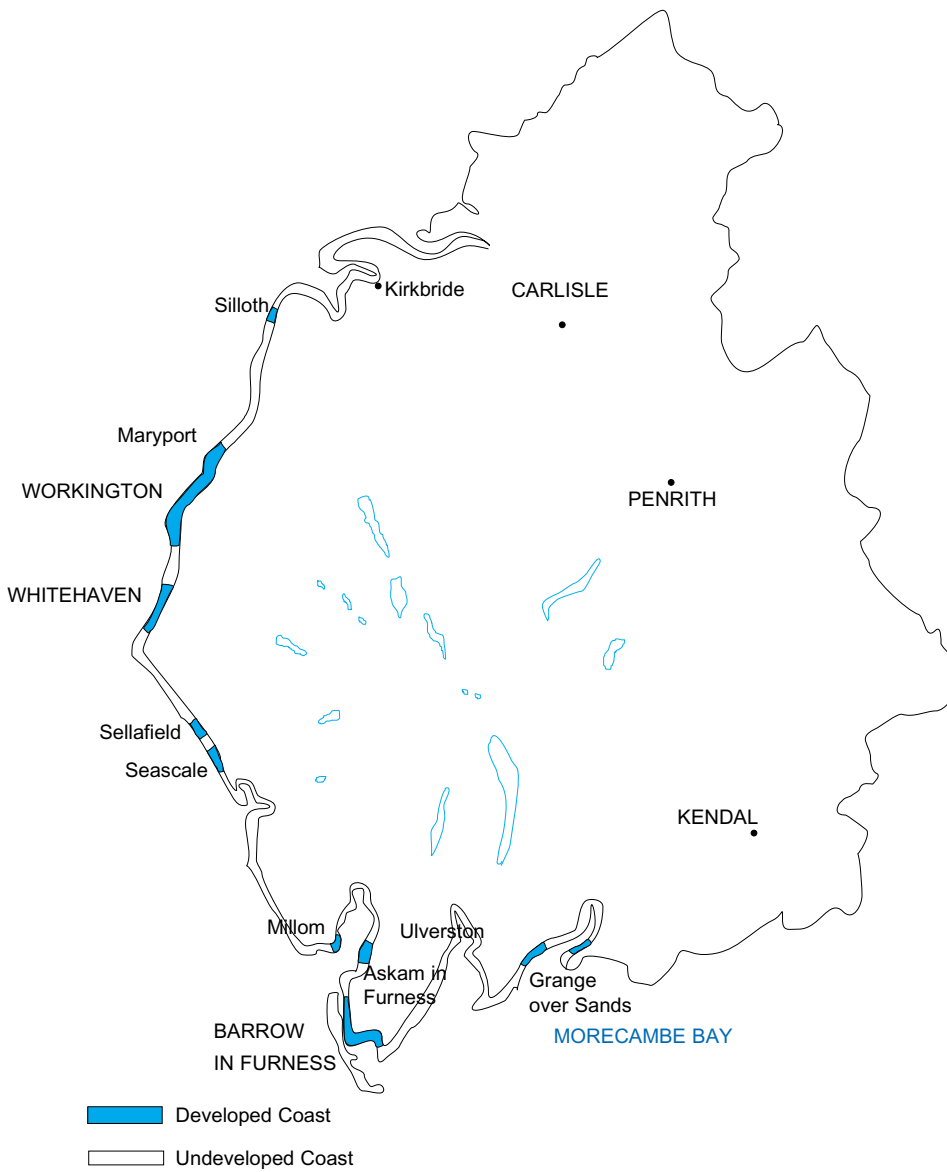


Figure 9 Developed and Undeveloped areas of Coast.

Policy C37 : Development on the coast

Developed and undeveloped coast are defined in Figure 9. Development in the undeveloped coast will be permitted where it requires a coastal location and cannot reasonably be located in the developed coast, providing it is not detrimental to the landscape character.

Policy C38 : Coastal defence

Development proposals should take into account the sustainable planning and management of coastal defences. Development should:

1. be in accord with
 - a) flood risk statements and assessments,
 - b) Indicative Flood Plain Maps,
 - c) Coastal Habitat Management Plans
 - d) Shoreline Management Plans,
2. be away from areas of flood risk, coastal erosion and unstable land,
3. not prejudice coastal defences, or the capacity of the coast to form a natural sea defence or to adjust to changes, without endangering life or property, and
4. be allowed to relocate from areas of the coast that cannot be sustainably defended in the long term.

7.5 The developed coast comprises Cumbria's coastal communities identified as key service centres in Policy ST2 and other towns and villages consistent with Policy ST3. In these areas regeneration initiatives have in particular sought to develop and promote the attractiveness of the waterfront resource as a way of encouraging new development and investment. The strategy 'New Visions For Furness and West Cumbria' aims to initiate a coastal renaissance through greater accessibility to and from coastal areas, enhancing the attractiveness of Georgian coastal towns like Whitehaven and Maryport and developing a new infrastructure to support the creation of clean and renewable energy.

7.6 Development that helps build on the regeneration of coastal communities within the developed coast (see Policy ST6) will be promoted consistent with Policy CZ3 of Regional Planning Guidance. Some development requires a coastal location to be able to fulfil its function. Where possible this should be located within the developed coast and should be given priority over other uses. Policies EM10 and T23 safeguard land to sustain the operational or related role of ports. **Policy C37**

Coastal Defence

7.7 In deciding the location of new development the effect of flooding and erosion must be taken into account (see Policy ST1). Global climate change is likely to become a more pressing problem with rising sea levels and the growing possibility of more regular and severe instances of coastal flooding and erosion. Defending the coast against the impact of flooding and erosion will have implications for both developed and undeveloped coast and for occupiers of land and buildings. Coastal defence is expensive, can be visually intrusive, and may not be sustainable in the long term. It may not be possible or appropriate therefore to defend the whole of Cumbria's coastline.

7.8 To address this Policy CZ2b of Regional Planning Guidance requires local authorities to take into account the planning and management of coastal defences. Shoreline Management Plans define areas of the Cumbria Coast, which without protection would be subject to further erosion and areas where managed retreat (allowing the sea to encroach in a controlled manner), particularly in remoter coastal areas is an option. Local Plans will need to take into account detailed work on protection measures. Consideration will be needed on how to define the appropriate policies on flood risk areas and criteria for assessing the relocation of existing development. **Policy C38**