

## 7 Managing the coast and water resources

- 7.1 Cumbria's coast, river courses and ecosystems are faced with many problems such as pollution, 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 have been formed 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 are currently in preparation. 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. Partnership and management schemes have also been formed for freshwater habitats. Examples include the Lake District Still Waters Partnership and the River Eden Conservation Strategy.

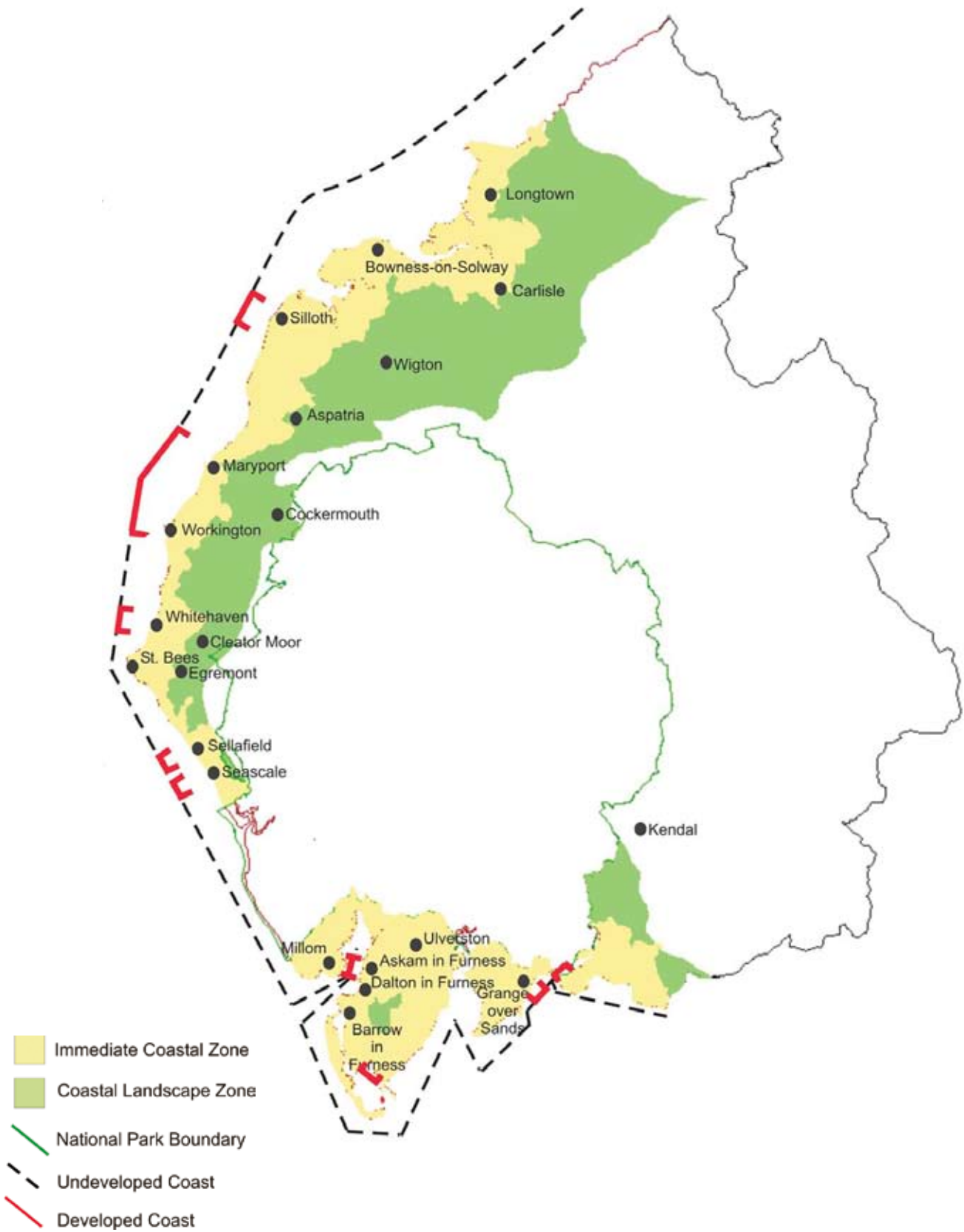


Whitehaven Harbour - Photo by Cumbria County Council

## 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.
- 7.4 Policy CZ1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy requires Local Authorities to define a coastal zone. This assessment is shown in Figure 9. The areas shown are intended as broad indications of coastal zone and not precise delineators of it. The boundaries will be refined and re-examined in Local Development Documents.
- 7.5 Two coastal zones have been defined, a Coastal Landscape Zone and an Immediate Coastal Zone. The Coastal Landscape Zone has been derived using the boundaries of the Countryside Commissions 'Countryside Character Areas'. Further details will be available in the forthcoming guidance (see paragraph 6.8). It is drawn widely and includes substantial inland hinterlands. It will provide a basis for ensuring developments, such as energy, that may have a major impact on the landscape are fully taken into account. The Immediate Coastal Zone is a refined version of the Coastal Landscape Zone. It is based on the more detailed landscape types and the sub types identified in the Cumbria Landscape Classification. The Immediate Coastal Zone enables issues with more localised impact, such as urban development or shoreline management, to be assessed. The boundaries of the Immediate Coastal Zone have been influenced by Parish boundaries.
- 7.6 Local Authorities will need to ensure that Local Development Frameworks provide policies to assess the range of land use issues that affect the coast. To assist this, the coastal zone has been divided into developed and undeveloped coast consistent with Policy CZ1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

**Figure 9**  
**Developed and Undeveloped**  
**Areas of Coast**



- 7.7 The principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, namely taking a long view, adopting a holistic approach, using adaptive management, working with natural processes and within environmental limits, supporting and involving of all relevant administrative bodies, using a combination of instruments, facilitating participatory planning and reflecting local characteristics, will be taken forward in Local Development Frameworks.
- 7.8 Developed and undeveloped coast are shown in Figure 9, which also provides an indication of the Immediate Coastal Zone and the wider Coastal Landscape Zone. The developed coast comprises Cumbria's coastal communities identified as key service centres in Policy ST5 and other towns and villages consistent with Policy ST7. 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.
- 7.9 Development that helps build on the regeneration of coastal communities within the developed coast (see Policy ST10) will be promoted consistent with Policy CZ3 of the Regional Spatial Strategy. 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 non coastal uses, except where they would prejudice port operations. Policies EM13 and T26 safeguard land to sustain the operational or related role of ports. Coastal development within the AONBs and Lake District National Park should have regard to their statutory purposes and Policy E34.
- 7.10 Outside the developed coast the coastline comprises large tracts of open land providing valuable habitats, important recreation and leisure resources, with much also in use for agriculture. Protection of its open nature, beauty and tranquillity is important. Built development, including tourism facilities, should therefore be directed to the developed coast consistent with Policy ST5 and ST7.
- Policy C41.**

### **Policy C41: Development on the coast**

Development in the developed coast should sustain and regenerate coastal communities. 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 C42: Flood risk and development**

Development proposals should take into account an assessment of the risk of flooding and be in accordance with the search sequence outlined in Policy ST3.

Development will not be permitted on functional floodplains within areas with a high risk of flooding, except for essential transport and utilities infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere, including port related development. Land use changes not requiring built development may be permitted provided adequate warning and evacuation procedures are in place, and existing buildings incorporate floodproofing measures.

Elsewhere development that reduces flood risk or aids the operation of functional floodplains will be supported.

**Coastal defence and flood risk**

- 7.11 Climate change is expected to increase the risk of both coastal and river flooding and erosion as a result of sea level rise, more intense rainfall and more severe storms. Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 requires Local Authorities to take flood risk into account in formulating policies and allocating land and identifies Flood Zones to assist this assessment.
- 7.12 The Environment Agency has advised that subject to localised flooding problems identified in some key service centres the scale and location of development proposed by the Structure Plan is broadly acceptable. Local Development Frameworks will need to take forward the Structure Plan development strategy through specific allocations and policies guiding the location of development, consistent with the search sequence outlined in Policy ST3 (criteria 3). This will require Local Authorities to have regard to Flood Zone Maps, Flood Maps and Catchment Flood Management Plans. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will need to be carried out by Local Planning Authorities on a whole catchment basis and not just within the indicative floodplain, which may require joint working across administrative boundaries. To assist this process the Environment Agency and North West Regional Assembly have jointly issued 'Meeting the Sequential Flood Risk Test – guidance for the North West Region – July 2004.'
- 7.13 Local Development Frameworks will need to consider what type of development is acceptable in the Flood Zones identified by Policy ST3 (criteria 3), the need for and content of Flood Risk Assessments and mitigation measures to protect development from flooding and prevent flood risk elsewhere. Development will need to avoid functional floodplains within the areas that the Environment Agency has identified as being of high risk. In some cases developers will be required to undertake flood risk reduction measures. This may include engineered solutions, see also Policy C43, or controlling surface water run off at source through the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems, see also Policy ST3 (criterion 3).  
**Policy C42.**

7.14 Defending the coast and land close to river courses against the impact of flooding and erosion will have implications, particularly for both developed and undeveloped coast and for occupiers of land and buildings. Engineered defence solutions are expensive, can be visually intrusive, and may not be suitable in the long term. It is not economically or environmentally sound to seek to defend the whole of Cumbria's coastline or river courses.

7.15 To address this Policy CZ2B of the Regional Spatial Strategy 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. Some of these will be subject to managed retreat (allowing the sea to encroach in a controlled manner on parts of the coast where property will not be affected). Local Development Frameworks 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 C43.**

**Policy C43: Coastal and flood defence**

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

1. have regard to
  - a. Flood risk statements and assessments,
  - b. Indicative Flood Plain and Flood Zone Maps,
  - c. Coastal Habitat Management Plans
  - d. Shoreline Management Plans and Coastal Defence Strategies
2. avoid areas of flood risk, coastal erosion and unstable land,
3. not prejudice coastal or flood defences, nor the ability of operating authorities to maintain them, 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.