

Joint Local Plan Review for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland

COASTAL CHANGE BACKGROUND PAPER
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION VERSION

FEBRUARY 2017

This page has been intentionally left blank

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
	Purpose of Background Paper	1
	Local Plan and the Review	1
2.	National Policy and Guidance	2
	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2
	Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).....	3
	Evidence and Research	4
3.	Current Approach	6
4.	Reason for Change	7
5.	Proposed Approach	8

1. Introduction

PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND PAPER

- 1.1 This document is one of a number of background papers produced to support the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review.
- 1.2 This paper provides a general overview of issues relevant to coastal change. It is a working document which will be updated as evidence is acquired and the consultation process proceeds.

LOCAL PLAN AND THE REVIEW

- 1.3 In October 2015, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council adopted their Joint Local Plan¹. The Local Plan sets out a long term planning strategy for the area and includes detailed policies and site proposals for housing, employment, leisure and infrastructure. The adopted Local Plan is the main basis for making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.4 In his report on the examination of the Joint Local Plan², the Inspector indicated that he considered it to be "imperative that an early review is undertaken". The objective of the review is to identify additional housing land capable of meeting housing need to 2036, identify a long-term strategy for development in the Dorchester area by 2021; and reappraise housing provision in Sherborne.
- 1.5 If a review is absent, or the Local Plan becomes silent or out of date because of a lack of progress, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and the councils would have less control in determining where development goes. Failure to undertake a review or even start it promptly would be likely to increase the risk of developers submitting planning applications at an early stage.

¹ <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/jointlocalplan/west/weymouth>

² <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/421782/West-Dorset-Weymouth--Portland-Adopted-Local-Plan-Inspectors-Report>

2. National Policy and Guidance

- 2.1 National policy on coastal change is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (CD/OKP₁), with additional guidance provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

- 2.2 The NPPF has adopted the concept of adaptation as a means of delivering sustainable coastal change solutions within the land use planning system for England. The relevant parts of the NPPF are set out below:

Para 105. In coastal areas, local planning authorities should take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans and apply Integrated Coastal Zone Management across the local authority and land/sea boundaries, ensuring integration of the terrestrial and marine planning regimes.

Para 106. Local planning authorities should reduce the risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impact of physical changes to the coast. They should identify as a Coastal Change Management Area any likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast, and:

- be clear as to what development will be appropriate in such areas and in what circumstances; and*
- make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas*

Para 107 When assessing applications, authorities should consider development in a Coastal Change Management Area appropriate where it is demonstrated that:

It will be safe over its planned lifetime and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change

- The character of the coast including designations is not compromised*
- The development provides wider sustainability benefits; and*
- The development does not hinder the creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast.*

Para 108 Local planning authorities should also ensure appropriate development in a Coastal Change Management Area is not impacted by coastal change by limiting the planned life-time of the proposed development

through temporary permission and restoration conditions where necessary to reduce the risk to people and the development.

PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE (PPG)

- 2.3 The PPG reiterates the aims of the NPPF, and amongst other things provides guidance on the definition of Coastal Change Management Areas.
- Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) are areas identified in Local Plans as likely to be affected by coastal change (physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion).
 - CCMAs do not need to be defined where the accepted shoreline management plan policy is to hold or advance the line.
- 2.4 The PPG also provides guidance on the management of development in CCMAs including criteria for decision making.
- Essential infrastructure (transport and utility infrastructure necessary in areas of risk) may be permitted in a CCMA, provided there are clear plans to manage the impacts of coastal change.
 - Within the short-term risk areas (i.e. 20-year time horizon) only a limited range of types of development directly linked to the coastal strip, such as beach huts, cafes/tea rooms, car parks and sites used for holiday or short-let caravans and camping – all with time-limited planning permissions.
 - Within the medium (20 to 50-year) and long-term (up to 100-year) risk areas, a wider range of time-limited development, such as hotels, shops, office or leisure activities requiring a coastal location and providing substantial economic and social benefits to the community, may be appropriate. Other significant development, such as key community infrastructure, is unlikely to be appropriate unless it has to be sited within the coastal change management area to provide the intended benefit to the wider community and there are clear, costed plans to manage the impact of coastal change on it and the service it provides.
 - Permanent new residential development will not be appropriate within a coastal change management area.
 - Formally allocating land in Local Plans for relocation of development and habitat affected by coastal change may be appropriate in some instances. An approach that takes into account the exceptional circumstances of having to replace existing development at risk of coastal change by granting planning permissions where normally they would be refused may be more suitable for some coastal authorities.

EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2 (SMP2)

- 2.5 The Durlston Head to Rame Head Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2) (AD/ENV4) provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal evolution and presents a policy framework to address these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner. These risks are identified in three time horizons (up to 20, 50 and 100 years) and include maps showing the geographical extent of each risk area.
- 2.6 The SMP identified that it will not be technically, economically or environmentally sustainable nor indeed desirable, to defend all locations against future coastal change. Limited public funding in the future also means continuing to defend all areas that currently benefit from coastal defences will not be affordable.
- 2.7 As such, the SMP2 identifies four management policies, these are:
- Hold the line
 - Advance the line
 - Managed Realignment
 - No Active Intervention

COASTAL CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING GUIDE (2015)

- 2.8 Recognising the need to consider adaptation as a means of helping deliver more sustainable shoreline management solutions, Defra led a national Coastal Change Pathfinder (CCP) programme which ran between 2009 and 2011, it explored new ways of adapting to coastal change.
- 2.9 In order to help promote a consistent and systematic approach to the development of CCMA's, Defra funded development of a new Coastal Change Adaptation Planning Guide which was published in 2015. This sought to draw together the lessons and best practice from the CCP programme and other similar projects and initiatives.
- 1.1 This provides a user-friendly guide for coastal practitioners involved in managing coastal change and implementing the NPPF. It provides solutions tailored to locally-specific options and a consistent process for establishing CCMA's.
- 2.10 The guidance recommends the application of a four-stage approach.
- Stage 1: Reviewing Shoreline Management Plan Policies
 - Stage 2: Identifying Risk
 - Stage 3: Mapping Areas of Risk
 - Stage 4: Delivering Adaptation through Planning

COASTAL RISK PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR WEST DORSET, WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND (CPRG)

- 2.11 This CPRG (CD/ENV8) follows the four-stage approach identified in para 2.11.
- 2.12 Stage 1: The Shoreline Management Plan policies relating to each of the 33 separate sections of the coastline within West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland are reviewed.
- 2.13 Stage 2: The guidance identifies various coastal change processes based on information contained in the Shoreline Management Plan, National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping and more recent studies completed post-SMP. The CPRG provides a description of the nature of the coastal change risks including the nature of the hazards and the timing and frequency of the risks occurring. The CPRG predicts the potential future cliff recession in each area over the next 20, 50 and 100 years.
- 2.14 Stage 3: Each section of the coast is mapped showing the 20 year, 50 year and 100 year recession extents.
- 2.15 Stage 4: The guidance also makes recommendations for development management including:
- development restrictions setting out where different types of appropriate development should or should not occur based on the risk zones.
 - the evidence required to support planning applications for different types of development within different risk zones.
 - future planning policy recommendations.

REVIEW OF ROLLBACK

- 2.16 In July 2016, Defra produced a paper which evaluated the process of rollback in Coastal Change Pathfinder projects. The evidence from these projects suggests that rollback with the right policies and mechanisms in place, is a feasible adaptation option and that is desirable from the perspective of the local authority and the individuals at imminent risk of coastal erosion. However, the review established a number of barriers, principally:
- Availability of land – difficulty in obtaining land for relocating assets that is both suitable and affordable to the asset owner and the wider community.
 - Obtaining consent to development land – in order for rollback to be feasible, it is vital that planning consent is obtained to allow assets to be relocated inland.

3. Current Approach

COASTAL EROSION AND LAND INSTABILITY: POLICY ENV 7

- 3.1 Coastal change management is dealt with by policy ENV7 in the adopted local plan. The general principle of the current approach is to direct new development away from areas vulnerable to coastal erosion and land instability unless it can be demonstrated that the site is stable or can be made stable. The areas of coastal change are shown on the proposals map.
- 3.2 The policy in full states:
 - i. New development will be directed away from areas vulnerable to coastal erosion and land instability to avoid putting people at risk unless it can be demonstrated that the site is stable or could be made stable, and that the development is unlikely to trigger landsliding, subsidence, or exacerbate erosion within or beyond the boundaries of the site
 - ii. The councils will identify Coastal Change Management Areas through a policy document.
- 3.3 Policy ENV7 recognises that further work is necessary and proposes to identify Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) based on the Shoreline Management Plan and supporting evidence.

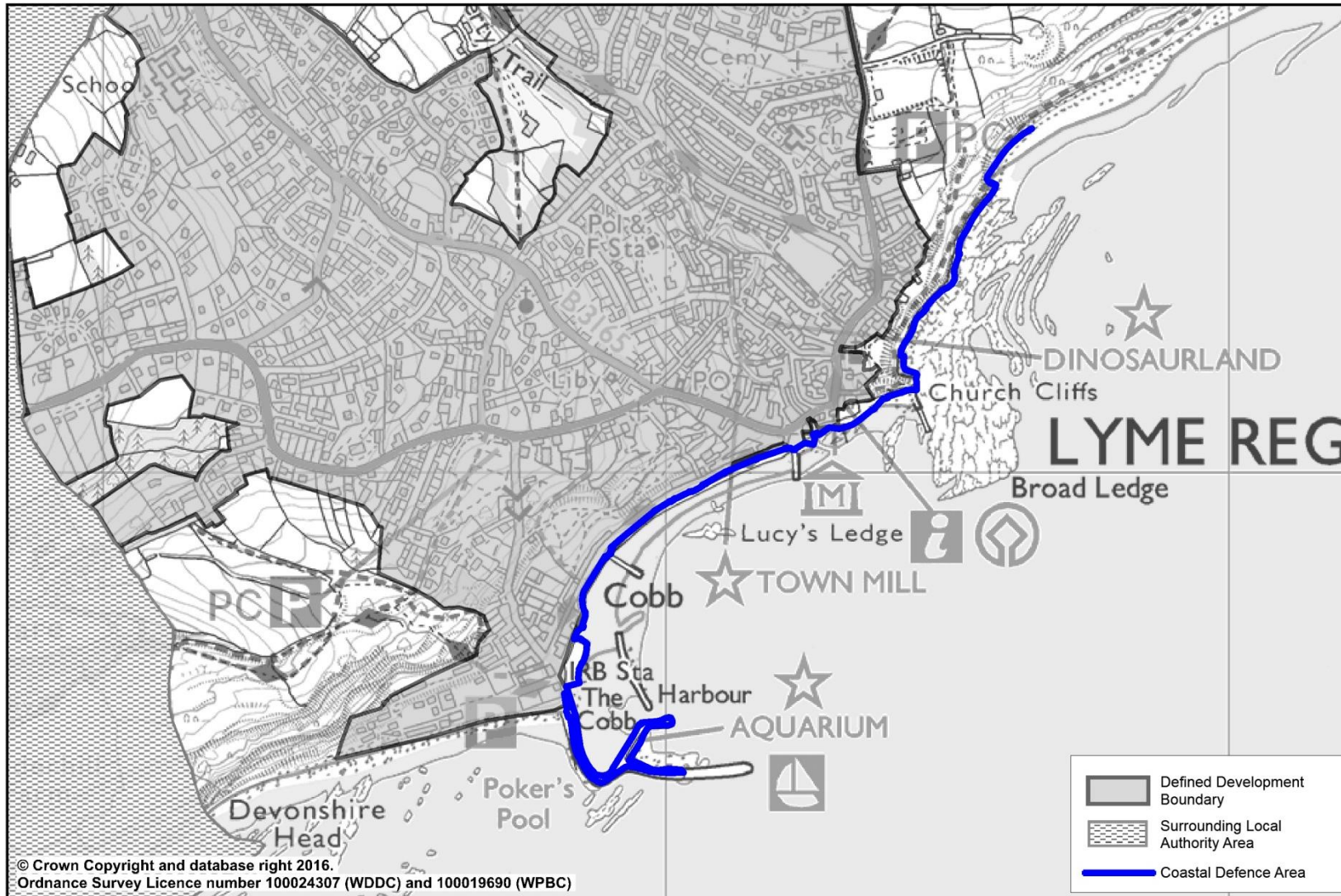
4. Reason for Change

- 4.1 Identifying Coastal Change Management Areas and the forms of development and associated infrastructure that are appropriate within them is necessary to comply with national policy.
- 4.2 To fully comply with the requirements of national policy, the Local Plan should also consider the case for making provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas.

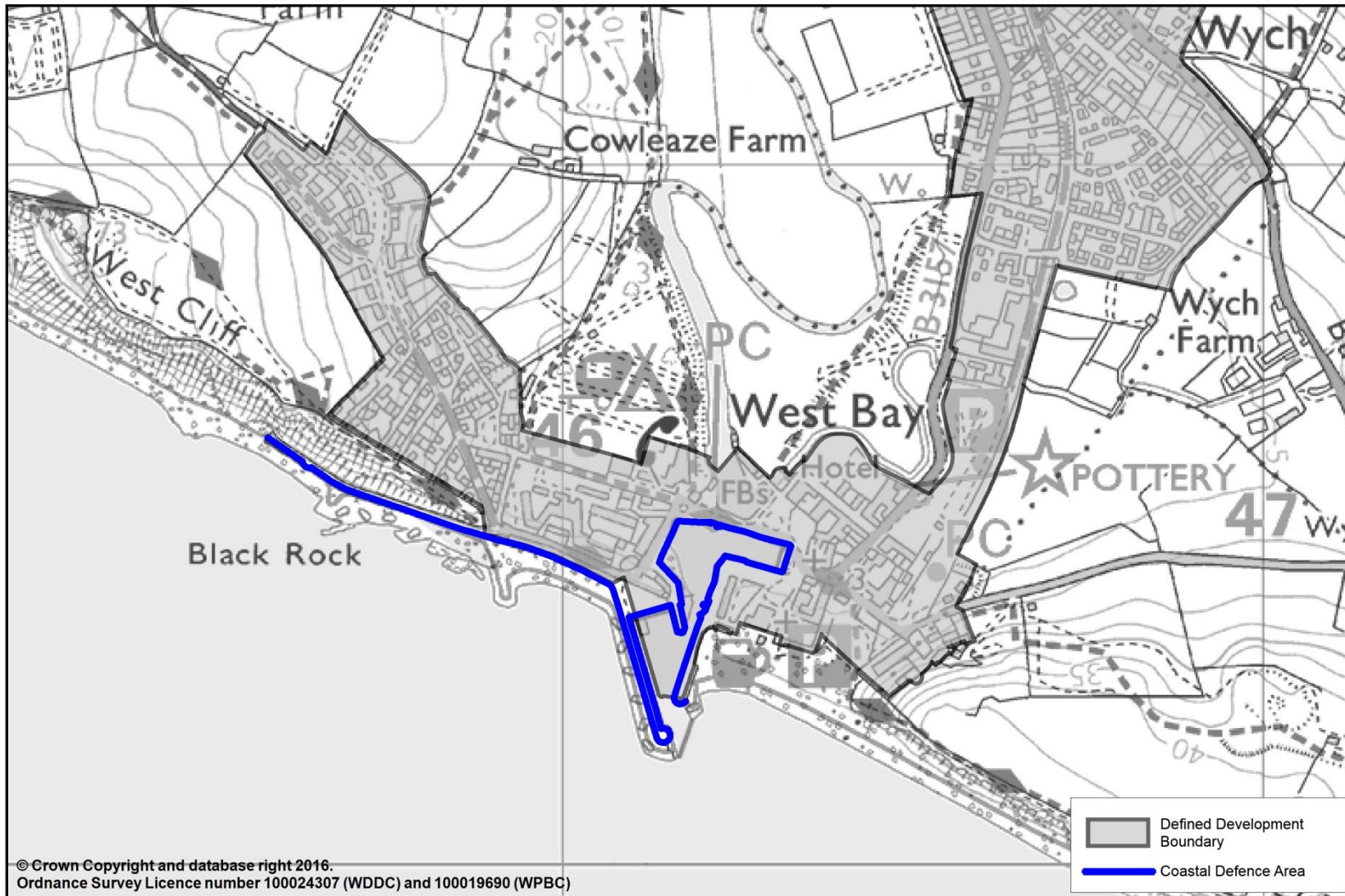
5. Proposed Approach

- 5.1 The councils propose to follow the recommendations of the Coastal Risk Planning Guidance by designating the majority of the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Coastline as a CCMA in the Local Plan Review. This approach suits the nature and extent of risk across the plan area coastline.
- 5.2 The defended areas of Weymouth Town Centre, West Bay Harbour and Lyme Regis Harbour where the SMP policy is to hold or advance the line would not form part of the Coastal Change Management Area. The full extent of each defended area are shown in Maps 1-3.

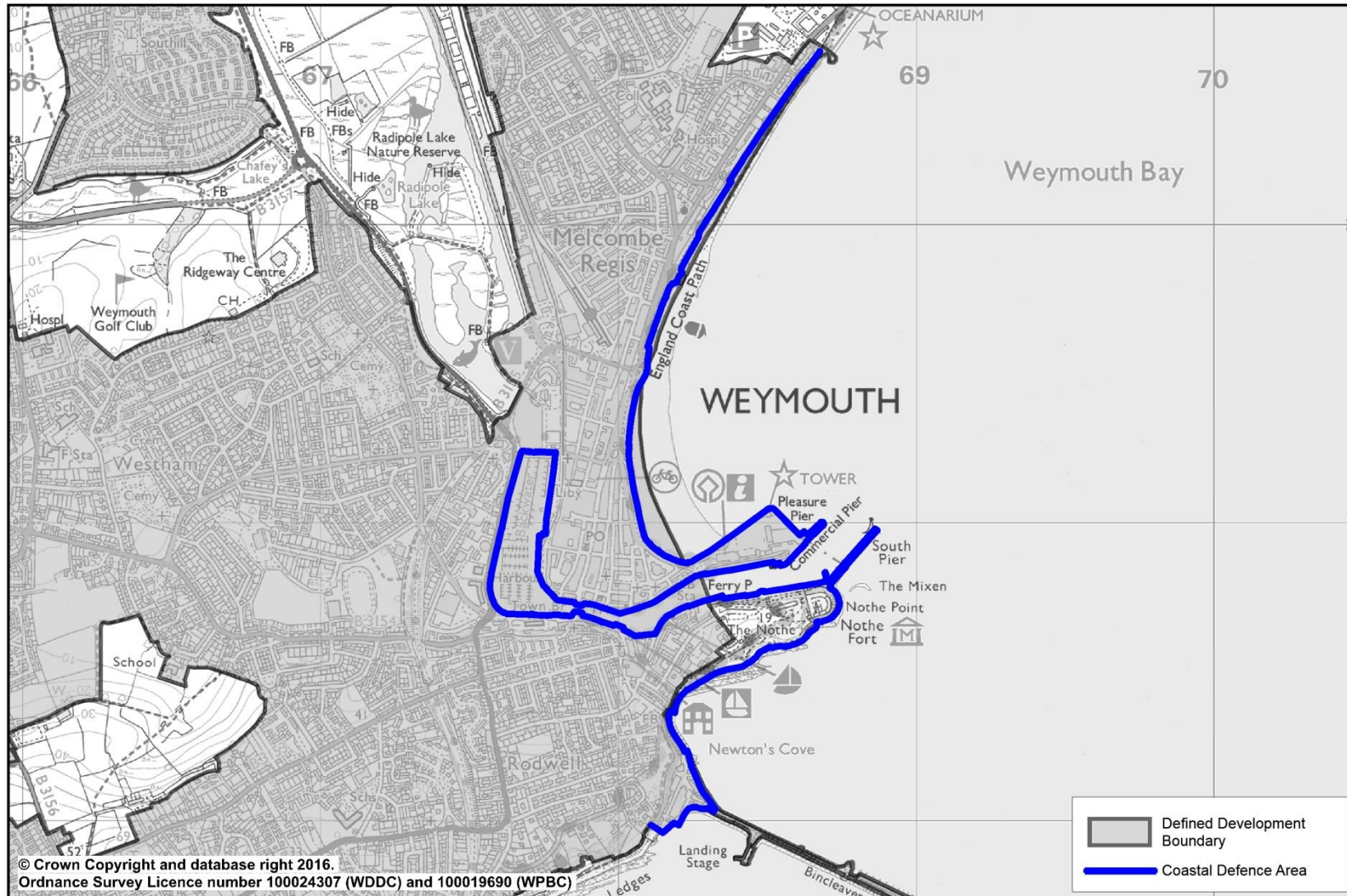
MAP 1: AREA EXCLUDED FROM CCMA (LYME REGIS HARBOUR)



MAP 2: AREA EXCLUDED FROM CCMA (WEST BAY HARBOUR)



MAP 3: AREA EXCLUDED FROM CCMA (WEYMOUTH HARBOUR)



5.3 The first in the issues and options consultation is whether this approach should be followed.

24-i. Do you agree that all parts of coastline except for the defended areas of Weymouth Town Centre, West Bay Harbour and Lyme Regis Harbour should be designated as a Coastal Change Management Area?

5.4 The second question deals with the choice of appropriate development in areas of coast change. The proposed approach is to follow the suggested criteria from national planning guidance.

Figure 5.1: Approach to development within CCMA's

RISK OF COASTAL EROSION	APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT	EXAMPLES
Immediate (20 year time horizon)	Limited range of types of development directly linked to the coastal strip. Time-limited planning permission only	Beach huts, cafes/tea rooms, car parks and sites for holiday or short-let caravans and camping This excludes permanent residential development
Medium (20 to 50 year time horizon)	Wider range of types of development with time limited planning permission	Hotels, shops, office or leisure activities requiring a coastal location and providing substantial economic and social benefits to the community. This excludes permanent residential development
long-term (up to 100-year time horizon)		

24-ii. Should the council limit the type of development that should or should not occur in the CCMA as set out in Figure 22.1 (of the Issues and Options document)?

5.5 The third and fourth questions ask how to deal with development that already exists in areas vulnerable to coastal change and instability. The proposed approach is to facilitate the relocation of affected property (e.g. houses, farmsteads, commercial premises) further inland through roll back policies which seek to provide flexibility to enable development that would not normally be permitted in undeveloped coastal locations.

24-iii. Should the council introduce a rollback policy to allow development threatened by coastal erosion to obtain planning permission to be replaced and relocated further inland?

24-iv. If so, should the council restrict the types of development which can roll back?

5.6 In some undefended areas, for instance along the north-western shore of Portland Harbour, the rate of coastal erosion is likely to result in the loss of residential properties, roads, commercial premises e.g. caravan / holiday parks and coastal footpaths. The final question asks how to deal with areas of the coastline where the impacts and potential loss of existing assets are most acute.

24-v. In areas where the risk to assets is most acute, should the councils formally allocate land for the relocation of development, infrastructure and habitat affected by coastal change?