

Coastal Partners Position Statement: Southmoor

Key Players & Responsibilities

Southmoor Landowner

The seawall at Southmoor and Southmoor field is privately owned. Maintenance of these defences will be at the discretion of the private landowner.

Environment Agency

Historically, the privately owned coastal defence at Southmoor has been maintained by the Environment Agency (EA). There is however, no legal obligation for the Environment Agency to undertake these works, and as such, the EA can stop maintaining these defences if the cost is judged to outweigh the benefits. Consequently, the EA have notified the private landowner at Southmoor that they will no longer maintain these defences.

Havant Borough Council

Havant Borough Council (HBC) do not have responsibility or any legal obligation to maintain the private defences at Southmoor. HBC have permissive powers to undertake coastal protection works but only where there is a wide public benefit in doing so; such as flood risk to life and property. That is not the case at Southmoor.

HBC do however act to secure funding and deliver projects using permissive powers where there are sufficient benefits to the public, i.e. when there is a clear economic benefit to developing coastal defence works, when there is an appropriate engineering solution that is achievable and where environment legislation is not contravened.

Hampshire County Council

Hampshire County Council (HCC) has a duty to maintain the surface of the footpath at Southmoor. They also have the powers to make orders to divert or close a footpath if it becomes unsafe or constitutes a safety hazard. HCC are continuing with the current watching brief of the path, following the EA's notice that they are no longer maintaining the sea defences; namely, the path is inspected on a 4-monthly cycle. Should the erosion reach a point that the path is no longer navigable, then this right of access would be lost, and HCC would initially implement a Temporary Closure. HCC would probably look to negotiate a rolled back path, but this would be dependent on landowner's co-operation.

Utility Companies

Protection of utility infrastructure at Southmoor is the responsibility of the relevant asset owners.

Southmoor Realignment Scheme

The EA secured funding from Government to appraise the option of a managed realignment scheme at Southmoor for the creation of new intertidal habitat.

There are however, a number of major constraints within the site relating to important utilities infrastructure, including SSE, SGN, Southern Water and Portsmouth Water assets. Therefore, the escalating requirements needed to protect these assets in situ meant a decrease in the available land for potential habitat creation and a significant increase in scheme construction costs.

Following extensive option, environmental and economic appraisal, the scheme was deemed not financially viable and therefore has not been progressed any further by the EA.