

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Thursday, 17th October, 2024 at 6.00pm.

## PRESENT

Councillor Tom Ashton (Chairman)  
Councillor Terry Aldridge (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mark Dannatt, Roger Dawson, David Hall, Daniel McNally, Paul Rickett, Daniel Simpson, Terry Taylor and Ruchira Yarsley

Councillor Ruchira Yarsley attended the Meeting as a Substitute.

Councillors Craig Leyland and Robert Watson attended the Meeting as Observers.

## OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Phil Norman	- Assistant Director – Planning and Strategic Infrastructure
Greg Macrdechian	- Interim Local Plan Lead
Pranali Parikh	- Director Economic Development
Paul Jackson	- Executive Programme Manager
Elaine Speed	- Senior Democratic Services Officer and Civic Officer
Lynda Eastwood	- Democratic Services Officer

## OTHER ATTENDEES:

Deborah Higton - The Environment Agency

## 10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Craig Leyland and Greg Macrdechian, Interim Local Plan Lead, to the Meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Alex Hall.

It was noted that, in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice had been given that Councillor Ruchira Yarsley had been appointed to the Committee in place of Councillor Travis Hesketh for this Meeting only.

## 11. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

At this point in the Meeting, Members were invited to declare any relevant interests. None were received.

**12. MINUTES:**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

**13. ACTIONS:**

It was agreed that the Actions would be deferred to the next Committee Meeting.

**14. PRESENTATION BY THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY ON THE STATE OF THE COASTAL DEFENCES:**

Deborah Higon, Lincolnshire Coast Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency (EA) presented Members with an update and presentation on the state of coastal defences.

A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix A to the Minutes

Following which, Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

In response to a query relating to Zone B where the hard defences were located, Deborah Higon advised Members they were based from Mablethorpe to Skegness. Members were further advised that some areas in between Mablethorpe and Skegness were missing the concrete structures, however these areas had a more natural system with some form of hard engineering underneath.

Following a query with regards to the 20,000 properties protected by the hard defences and the grant in aid funding, Deborah Higon confirmed that only the properties that existed prior to 2012 and at the cut-off date were counted. New properties did not generate a grant in aid funding as they would not be at risk of flooding.

A query was raised on whether the coastal defence work may stop due to it being one of the biggest carbon emitters and also whether carbon reduction was classed as being more important than coastal defence work. Deborah Higon responded that it was not a reason for them not to continue with coastal defence work and they would look at ways to mitigate this.

A Member queried whether there was a planting regime in place along the coast to enable the natural defences and whether the EA was proactive in such schemes.

Deborah Higon informed Members that the EA was carrying out planting and highlighted that one of the best natural defences was the intertidal area as when built up with vegetation, would catch the sand and grow the beaches which was a great form of flood defence. Members were also informed that the EA was looking at changing the design profile of the beach.

A Member queried whether there was any work being carried out on The Wash barrier. Deborah Higton advised Members that the EA did not have much information on The Wash barrier and that it would be down to the developer to demonstrate that they were mitigating any impacts when putting any infrastructure into the tidal area.

Details relating to development in the Humber Estuary and what the long-term implications were was also discussed, with Members being informed that the EA was working closely with the Humber Strategy to demonstrate the impact of the mitigation.

Further to a comment made relating to the marram grass on Cleethorpes beach close to the leisure centre, Members were informed that this was a wide, shallow intertidal area which allowed the building-up of marram grass and salt marsh, providing a good way of managing flood risk.

A request was made for Deborah Higton to present to the Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board, to which she responded she would be happy to do.

At the indulgence of the Chairman, Councillor Craig Leyland queried why the agricultural land was not valued in the same way as developed land when it came to the grant in aid funding as this caused a structural disadvantage in Lincolnshire.

Deborah Higton advised that there was a difference in the rate of funding that the EA received and that it measured the outcomes. One of the measures was that properties were better protected instead of homes being protected which had attracted a greater rate of funding compared to the lower rate for agricultural land. It was something being seen across all rural areas in the country. The level of flood risk was also being looked at as many properties were at a significant risk which changed the amount of grant in aid funding along with the higher the level of deprivation.

Following a query with regards to whether tourism received any grant in aid, Deborah Higton advised that tourism was counted in to the economics but did not attract the same amount of funding as properties. Members were further advised that static caravans were not included in the property count as they could be relocated.

In relation to the 2012 cut-off for grant in aid, a Member queried whether the cut-off date applied to all categories. Deborah Higton responded that she understood it was just for properties rather than infrastructure but would check and report back.

A Member further commented that there was a big gap in the funding that was received contrary to funding what was needed in order to keep the North Sea where it was.

Further to a query on inland flood cells and whether the Lincolnshire coast operated as a single flood cell, Deborah Higton advised Members that the

Lincolnshire coast operated as a single flood cell and there were slight changes to the topography due to the area being so flat.

A Member queried whether wind turbines had created sandbanks of their own. Deborah Higton responded that the EA had not noticed any changes on the ground, but they were looking at more bathymetric data and trying to better understand the impact of changes in weather and what that might mean for the amount of erosion, sand losses and sand movement.

Following a question relating to S106s and whether sand could be brought in to where wind turbines were located, the Assistant Director – Planning & Strategic Infrastructure advised that they would have to look at the details in each case as they came in.

A Member further queried whether structures built out of natural rock on the seafront would reduce corrosion and be more cost effective. Deborah Higton advised that there was already natural rock on the seafront, buried under the sand, and that sand was the most cost-effective method. Members were informed that the EA would always look at alternative materials.

At the indulgence of the Chairman, Councillor Robert Watson commented that marram grass planting worked well and queried whether it would be considered to plant it continuously along the coast to help control the sand blowing on to the promenade, especially in Sutton on Sea. A query was also raised with regards to planting other species of plants to enhance the planting regime.

Deborah Higton replied that they would consider those suggestions during the upcoming planting scheme.

At the indulgence of the Chairman, Councillor Robert Watson further queried whether controlled structures were still a possibility to reduce sand loss. Deborah Higton explained that there was an issue with the defences at the rear of beach. The plan was to build on top of those concrete defences, however if that was not possible, the controlled structures would only be of benefit up until 2040. After that time, it would then be necessary to come up with an alternative plan to replace the hard defences.

Councillor Robert Watson further queried whether there were plans in place for any emergency renourishment in areas where storms had wiped out the sand.

Deborah Higton advised that there was a new beach strategy, and the EA were looking at the contingency plans for it. Sand recycling had also been considered. Furthermore, there was a working group looking at the trigger points and working with the local resilience forum around 'warning and informing' and encouraging people to sign up for flood warnings.

A Member commented that there was a need for the younger generation to be educated on coastal flooding.

Deborah Higton agreed with the comment and informed Members that her EA colleagues were working with the public, helping them with flood plans and attending public events. They had also attempted to go in to schools, however there was not a great take-up. Reference was made to the successful Hello Lamp Post scheme. Members were advised that posters had been put on lamp posts and included a QR code for people to scan to gain and share knowledge about the coast.

Further to a query on how closely the EA worked with ELDC on the production of the Local Plan, Deborah Higton informed Members that the EA had worked very closely with ELDC in the past and having already started conversations around the best way to engage, was intending to continue with that. The Assistant Director – Planning and Strategic Infrastructure agreed and advised Members that he would come back to the Committee to explain the next steps.

A Member queried how funds would be raised if they could not be raised by the partners.

Deborah Higton advised Members that £800m would be raised in grant in aid across 100 years. However, this would not be sufficient. Therefore, a partnership including District Council, County Council and the drainage boards would need to be developed in order to look at other opportunities.

Following a query with regards to how much farmland across East Lindsey was flooded at the beginning of 2024, Deborah Higton replied that this information had been mapped and would find out the figures.

*N.B. Councillor Daniel McNally left the Meeting at 7:04pm.*

At the indulgence of the Chairman, Councillor Craig Leyland raised a concern with regards to the funding and education for raising awareness of how serious the coastal flooding was for East Lindsey and the need to make this argument with the Government.

A discussion ensued relating to whether caravans on the coast could be replaced by housing, in order to secure more funding. A Member stated that the housing would be in a flood risk area and would not obtain planning permission, unless submitted with mitigation which would be very expensive and was a scenario that developers were keen to avoid.

*N.B. Councillor Craig Leyland left the Meeting at 7:09pm and returned at 7:10pm.*

Following a query on when the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Phase 1 Report would be available to ELDC, the Assistant Director – Planning and Strategic Infrastructure advised that it was still expected, however could not provide a firm date.

In summing up, the Chairman reiterated the main issues and thanked Deborah Higton for her presentation.

**15. DISCUSSION REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS AND FORMAT FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:**

*N.B. Councillor Terry Aldridge left the Meeting at 7:14pm and returned at 7:15pm.*

*N.B. Councillor Craig Leyland left the Meeting at 7:14pm.*

The Chairman addressed Members with regards to the format for future meetings and the potential for holding a briefing or workshop instead of cancelling the scheduled Meeting when there was no substantive business.

A Member commented that historically, Members had relied on being presented with an Agenda instead of them being able to suggest items for the meeting.

A Member further commented that there were several subjects that would be useful to the Committee including Section 106 Agreements, renewable energy (covering the allocation of land areas), Members involvement in the decision-making of Tree Preservation Orders and an opportunity to revisit settlement scores. The Chairman commented that he was keen for the above items to be heard.

Following a request for an update on whether non-planning policy members would be able to attend the committee meetings, the Chairman confirmed he was agreeable with the request and would allow non-members, at his discretion, to join in the Meeting and discussions.

Members were advised that public meetings with a lack of substantive business would be cancelled and replaced with discussion sessions.

*N.B. Councillor Paul Rickett left the Meeting at 7:24pm and returned at 7:26pm.*

*N.B. Councillor Craig Leyland returned to the Meeting at 7:27pm.*

A discussion ensued with Members querying whether there was a place for an informal opportunity to meet and talk outside of the committee meetings, for example over Microsoft Teams. After a brief discussion, there were some reservations with regards to that suggestion.

A Member commented that the Planning Policy meetings needed to be transparent and that members of the public should be encouraged to attend.

Further suggestions were received including the opportunity of Planning Committee members to attend the meetings and to include the briefings as part of the Reserved Member Days.

A Member further commented that there was a lack of attendance at Planning Policy meetings by members of the public due to them being dis-engaged and highlighted that work was also needed to re-engage parish councils.

No further comments or questions were received.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

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# Lincolnshire Coast

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Name: Deborah Higon

Job title: Lincolnshire Coast Flood Risk Manager

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024

# Strategic approaches

- Third of Lincolnshire is below sea level
- 300km of raised defences for the coast and tidal rivers
- Climate change and ageing assets versus
- Growth and regeneration – the lowland area is part of the UK Food Valley

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# Lincolnshire Open Coast

## At Risk

20,000

Properties Protected

25,000

Static Caravans Protected

35,000

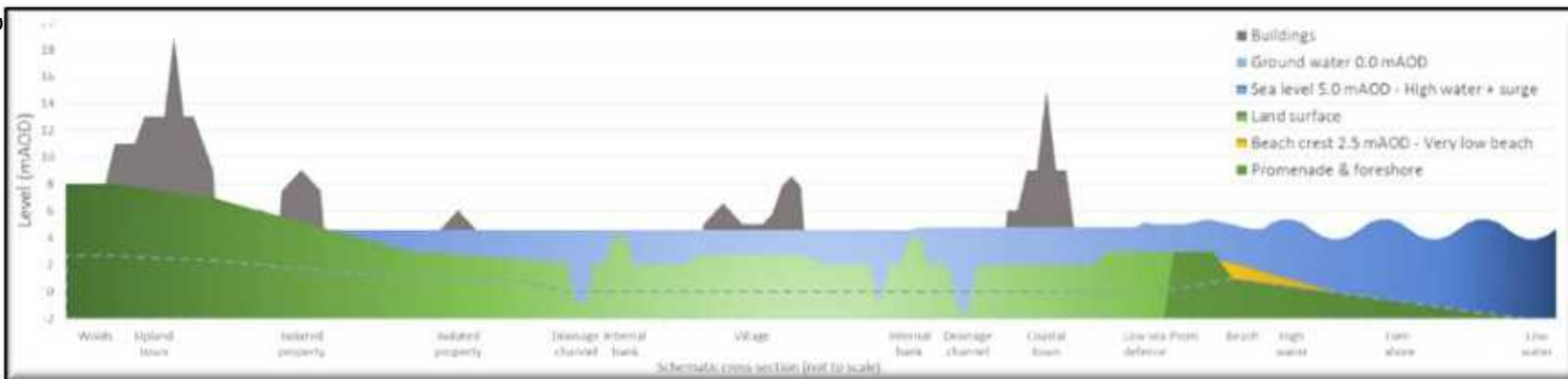
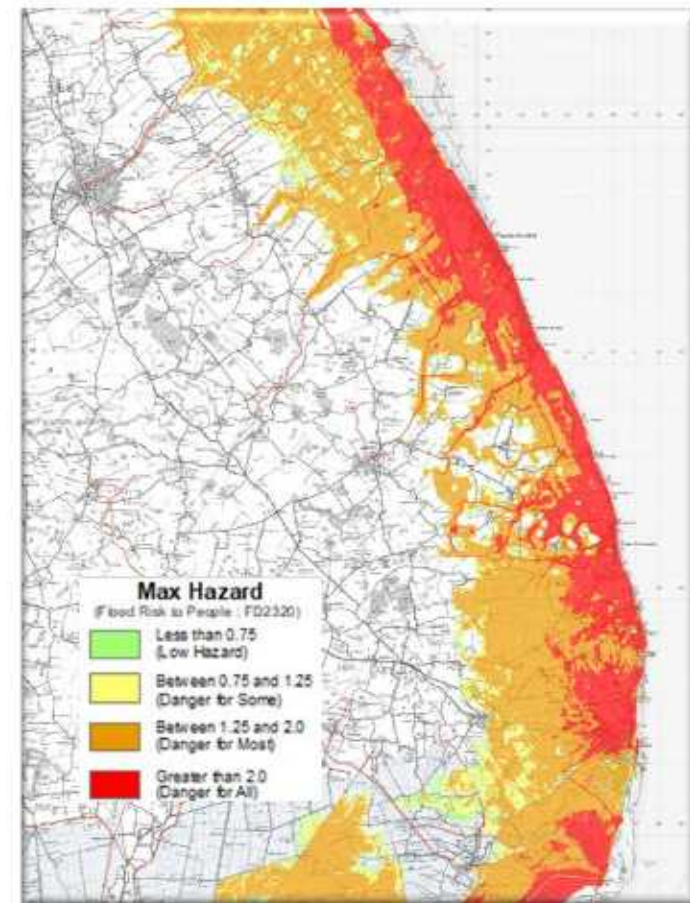
Prime Agricultural Land Protected with various environmental assets



## Shoreline Management Plan

	Policy Unit N South of Humberston Fittes to Theddlethorpe	Policy Unit O Viking Gas Terminal (Mablethorpe) to Southern End of Skegness	Policy Unit P Seacroft to Gibraltar Point
0-20yrs (2005-2025)	Hold the Line Maintain/Replace	Hold the Line Maintain/Replace	Hold the Line Local activity only
20-50 yrs (2025-2055)	Hold the Line Maintain/Replace	Hold the Line Maintain/Replace	Hold the Line Maintain/Replace
50-100yrs (2055-2105)	Hold the Line Maintain/Replace	Pending Agreement Pending Agreement	Hold the Line Local activity only

Coastal inundation  
on at least **14 days**  
**every month**  
(266 tides (2018))



# Benefits

Community and economy reliant on the flood defence

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Properties



Commercial Properties



Static Caravans  
£700m tourism industry



Prime Agricultural Land with  
various environmental assets



# Approved Strategy 2019

## Preferred Option – Hold The Line

- Dune systems in Zones A & C will provide 0.5% SoP for 100 year lifetime of strategy
- The 'hard defences' that make up 55% of Zone B frontage will form part of the 100 year solution
- Control structures to reduce sand losses plus raising of hard defences in 2070 to keep pace with rising sea levels in Zone B.
- Carbon reduction (2,100,000T BAU to 850,000T)
- Approved strategy £800m

## Progress to date:

- Approved beach management for 2021-2024
- Approved project to complete business case for transformation project (£17m)
- **Residual Life Assessment to validate asset condition assumptions in Strategy**



# Residual Life Assessment

## Study undertaken to provide:

- an estimated residual life of the sea defences in Zones A, B and C
- analysis to help plan future works as part of the Saltfleet to Gibraltar Point Strategy

• Four key criteria in **Zone B** to the assessing the overall residual life of structural elements :

- Geotechnical stability
- Overtopping
- Structural condition
- Undermining of structure
- **9 locations** identified to gain and indicative understanding of likely condition of the structures



# Why have things changed? Residual Life

Initial engineering assessment (£2.2m) has told us:

- Wave walls have corroded the reinforcement with an estimated residual life of less than 5 years if exposed to direct wave action
- Structures at high risk of chloride induced corrosion.
- The beach is critical to prolonging the residual life of the concrete defences.
- Majority of assets are expected to provide current Standard of Protection until the end of useful life (16-20 years) providing:
  - The beach profile is retained
  - The asset maintenance regime is enhanced
- 44% Dune frontage- currently providing a high level of protection **but** dynamic and should continue to be monitored.



# Impact on current strategy

## The beach is everything

- Non-abortive investment in concrete assets to sustain standard of service to 2040
- Existing assets unlikely to form part of the long term solution after 2040

A review of strategic options that don't rely on the existing assets needs to be undertaken





# Saltfleet to Gibraltar Point Strategy Approval (2019)

## Beach Management (BAU 2021-2024)

- Nourish beaches to design profile to deliver standard of service.

Approved F/2021/0281

Possible extension to 2025/2026 or 2026/2027 for CAM development

## Coast Asset Management (Sustain 2025-2039)

- Nourish beaches to design profile to deliver standard of service.
- Contract to establish delivery vehicle for
  - Incident management
  - Beach management
  - Asset Management

SOC

OBC

FBC

Defra Investment Committee

## Lincs Coast 2100 + (formally Enhancing Lincs Coast) (Transformation 2040-2120)

- Validate preferred option
  - Asset investigations
  - Revise costs
  - Revise benefits
  - Geomorphological study
- Review Strategic options in light of validation evidence

SOC BCUR assurance for F/2021/0432

OBC

FBC



# Key messages

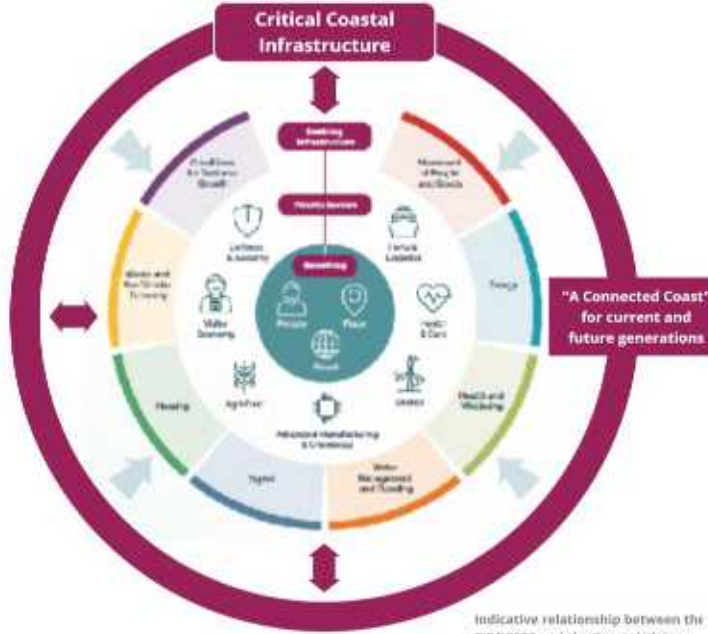
- The beach is critical to prolonging the residual life of the hard defences.
- We need to review the Lincolnshire Coast Strategy options
- Our timeline horizon for transformation has changed from 50-100yr to 25-50yr and may look significantly different
- This change to the investment profile means we may be faced with a shortfall in Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid funding
- Any revised strategic options will need to be developed in partnership due to the potential extent of change

## 3 options

- Deliver within GiA availability
- Do something different
- **Alternative investment with partners**

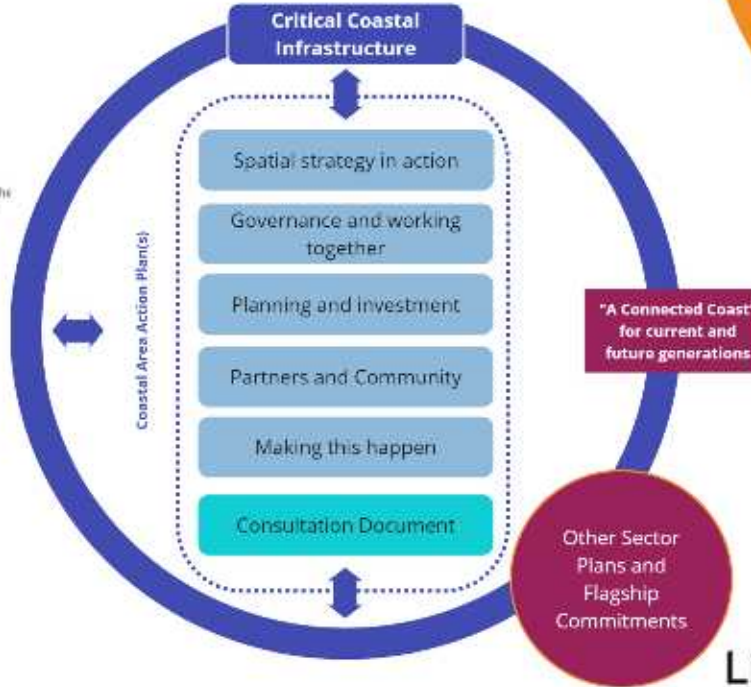
# Lincs Coast 2100+ Main Workstreams

## Coastal Vision/Mission

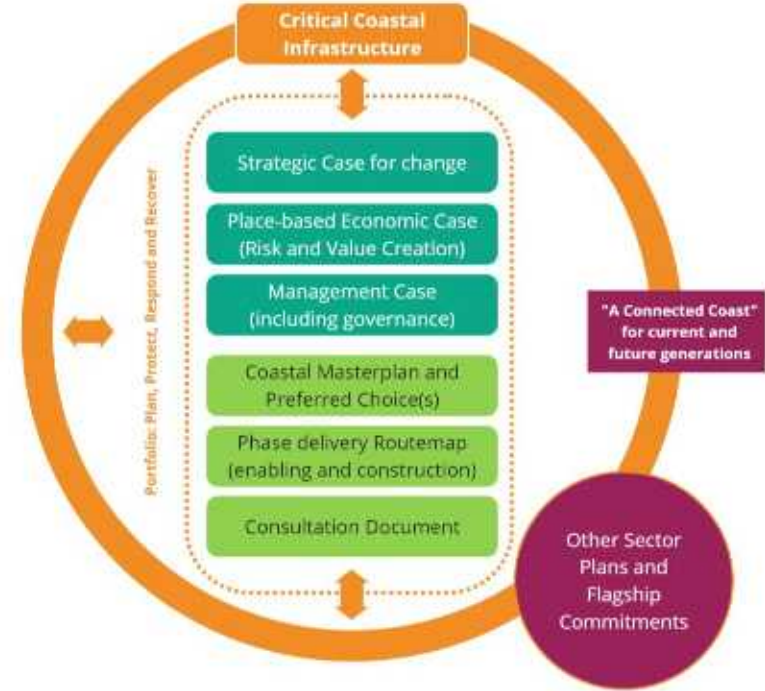


Indicative relationship between the SDF 2023 and the Coastal Vision

## Area Action Plan



## Investment Plan



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