

LGA Special Interest Group Annual Report to LGA Leadership Board

SIG Name:	LGA Coastal SIG
Lead Member:	Cllr Andy Smith
Lead Officer:	Bill Parker

Aims of the Coastal SIG

LGA Coastal SIG Mission Statement (<https://lgacoastalsig.com/about/mission-statement/>) The LGA Coastal SIG will champion and take forward the coastal strategy and represent the collective interests of all maritime local authorities by:

- a. bringing pressure on the Government to achieve a step change in the level of funding to overcome present and future problems;
- b. use every opportunity to secure full involvement of local Government at all levels of policy formulation concerning the coast;
- c. strongly oppose any changes which take responsibility and decision-making powers out of the hands of local democratic leaders.

(ToR agreed 11 December 2007. Available at <https://lgacoastalsig.com/about/terms-of-reference/>)

Key Activities / Outcomes of work undertaken

Relationships with Government: in furtherance of its objectives, the SIG has been fortunate to develop very close relationships with government, notably the Floods Minister Therese Coffey and the Chair of The EA, Emma Howard Boyd, and their respective staffs, and also a wide range of other NGOs.

Funding for coastal management: Concern over the future of funding to local authorities to deliver their responsibilities under the Coast Protection Act has been raised by many SIG LAs, notably Scarborough Borough Council, and via the Coastal Groups. Funding of management and maintenance of coast protection assets has been paid through formula funding within the RSG, now due to cease in 2019. RSG is in principle expected to be replaced by Business Rate Retention but it is anticipated that this will result in Coast Protection funding being lost or reduced, a critical issue for Coast Protection Authorities. In contrast, the Environment Agency has full funding for assets which they manage. The SIG have ongoing liaison with the Infrastructure & Projects Authority (IPA) at HM Treasury, to develop mechanisms in government to support this work and are preparing the case to consult with Defra and DCLG as soon as possible..

Coastal Adaptation: The SIG is significantly involved to improve decision making for new developments for sites at risk of coastal erosion or flooding, particularly as Climate

Change is realised. Some coastal communities are already at risk, and some have had to be re-located. This is an issue the SIG is working to ensure that learning is shared so that future risks and impacts are minimised. The SIG has pooled learning and issues which will be shared at the [3rd European Climate Change Adaptation Conference](#), June 2017.

Members learned at a recent meeting about the implications of [historic coastal waste sites such as landfills](#) which are becoming an increasing problem.

MMO licensing Many SIG member LAs have highlighted issues with this as a significant barrier to completing projects on time and within agreed budgets. The Chairman has highlighted this issue with the MMO Chief Executive and other senior management, and South Tyneside Council are championing this issue locally with the MMO licensing team in Newcastle so that understanding and methods of working are improved.

Skills and capacity in local authorities Engineering skills within coastal Local Authorities are being lost due to retirement and lack of replacement. Increasingly LAs cannot match wages paid by consultants. SIG Lead Officer Bill Parker contributed an [article highlighting this issue in the New Civil Engineer](#) magazine. Many LAs have been managing this situation to date by working in partnership, and the SIG is actively promoting development of this solution. A summary of the seminar hosted by the SIG in 2016 is available on the [Partnership Section of the website](#). The SIG are now planning to evidence this issue and source solutions between authorities, universities and partners.

Marine Protected Areas / Marine Litter / Bathing Waters The SIG continues to champion these topics, ensuring the LA perspective is included in decision making and sharing information and best practice.