

MOUNT'S BAY

SCOPING REPORT FOR MOUNT'S BAY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

FINAL

	Date	Author	Comment
V1 DRAFT	March 2024	KC	Draft output
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PREFACE

This report is an output for Year 2 of the project entitled “Coordinating Cornwall’s Coastal Recovery: coast and marine nature recovery action plans to achieve 30 by 30” project which ran from October 2023-March 2024.

The partnership taking this phase of the work forward is hosted by Cornwall Wildlife Trust and includes Cornwall Council, Cornwall Catchment Partnership, Environment Agency and Natural England. The project is funded through the Environment Agency’s Water Environment Improvement Fund under the banner of ‘Championing Coastal Collaboration’ (3Cs).

The work has been carried out through Kaja Curry Consulting and Services for Cornwall Wildlife Trust.



All reports are available at:

<https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/our-conservation-work/at-sea/coastal-partnerships>

1 INTRODUCTION

This report forms part of the work on the continuing **Cornwall 3Cs Project** which explores how best to build coastal collaboration to achieve coast and marine nature recovery plans. The work is hosted by Cornwall Wildlife Trust and the partnership includes Cornwall Council, Cornwall Catchment Partnership, Environment Agency and Natural England. The project is funded through the Environment Agency's Water Environment Improvement Fund under the banner of 'Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) and further information can be found here: [Coastal Partnerships | Cornwall Wildlife Trust](#)

Mount's Bay was selected as a study site due to the complexities it faces arising from climate change and the need to address flooding and coastal erosion, along with its high quality coastal and marine environment. It has several designations including the Mount's Bay Marine Conservation Zone, Marazion Marsh SPA and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The plan for this phase of the project was to scope potential next steps / options for developing a management framework to bring together the key stakeholders relating to statutory organisations, non-governmental bodies, businesses, and the wider communities, in order to deliver closer coastal collaboration to tackle the complex local issues.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Global and national

The global impacts of climate change are well documented through the UN's IPCC, and nationally through the UK's Government's work around climate change (HM Government, 2022) and so over the past years, Cornwall has been working to better understand what this might mean for the county.

2.2 Regional

The Climate Adaptation Strategy for Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly 2023 – 2027 (RSK et al., 2023) identifies the key risks and opportunities for the area and then sets out a regional adaptation and action plan. In this flooding, sea level rise and coastal erosion are seen as main hazards alongside reduced water availability, temperature changes and cascading impacts.

2.3 Cornwall

Cornwall is the first county to undertake a climate change risk assessment (Harrison, 2023) which underlines the need to tackle climate risks particularly in Cornwall around high potential sea level rises by the end of the century, high impact flooding, stronger and windier storms and faster coastal erosion. In order to oversee adaptation, Cornwall is in the process of setting up a Cornwall Climate Change Commission.

Cornwall is currently developing the 'Cornwall Adaptation Strategy' alongside smaller area-based plans including one for Mount's Bay. The Adaptation Strategy will provide a risk register for climate change in Cornwall along with strategic direction that brings together existing policies and setting 'red lines' for adaptation. It will also include principles for adaptation in Cornwall with an outline of approaches that will be utilised to manage risks and a blueprint for community adaptation plans alongside monitoring and reporting.

The Cornwall Adaptation Strategy will also include emerging area-based plans and strategies for sites facing critical challenges of which one will be Mount's Bay.

3 MOUNT'S BAY

3.1 Summary of area

Mount's Bay includes the coastal area from Marazion through to Mousehole and includes the frontages of Longrock and Eastern Green, Penzance Harbour area, along the Penzance Promenade through to Tolcarne and through Newlyn to Mousehole (**Error! Reference source not found.**). In addition to the built areas, the study area also includes the critical infrastructure at Long Rock of the railway line plus the main trunk roads and this, alongside the harbours and ports, provide added complexity.

Figure 1: Mount's Bay Study Area



In the water there are additional elements which need to be considered; including a newly discovered seagrass bed, access and safe haven for one of Britain's largest fishing fleets, a functioning ferry terminal serving the Isles of Scilly and potential future links to offshore renewables.

The area is also of high environmental quality with designated sites including SSSIs, Special Protection Areas and a Marine Conservation Zone.

The key challenges faced relate to flooding and erosion, particularly linked to storm events. In 2013/14 there was an unprecedented storm cluster that resulted in £20m in short and long-term repair costs although a lack of planning at that time led to a reactive management approach rather than making any meaningful progress to adaptation. This has been recognised in the Shoreline Management Plan 2 which sets out clearly that a new way of thinking is required.

Since then, much work has been undertaken including the following:

- 2015 – Mounts Bay Adaptive Frontages Assessment;
- 2017 – Marazion Marsh Water Level Management Plan;
- 2017 – Technical feasibility assessment for sandscaping;
- 2019 – Longrock coastal protection works;
- 2019 – Mount's Bay Coastal Resilience Strategy commenced.
- 2021- Penzance Promenade repairs and resurfacing;
- 2022: Newlyn breakwater eco-blocks project.

The next step now is to pull these all together into a Mount's Bay Coastal Strategy.

4 TOWARDS A MOUNT'S BAY COASTAL STRATEGY

In 2019, Cornwall Council, in collaboration with the Environment Agency, started work on the Mount's Bay Coastal Strategy as a means of has been working on developing a coastal strategy for the Mount's Bay area that will provide the framework for agreeing projects that come forward within the Mount's Bay area and to plan for them in a systematic way.

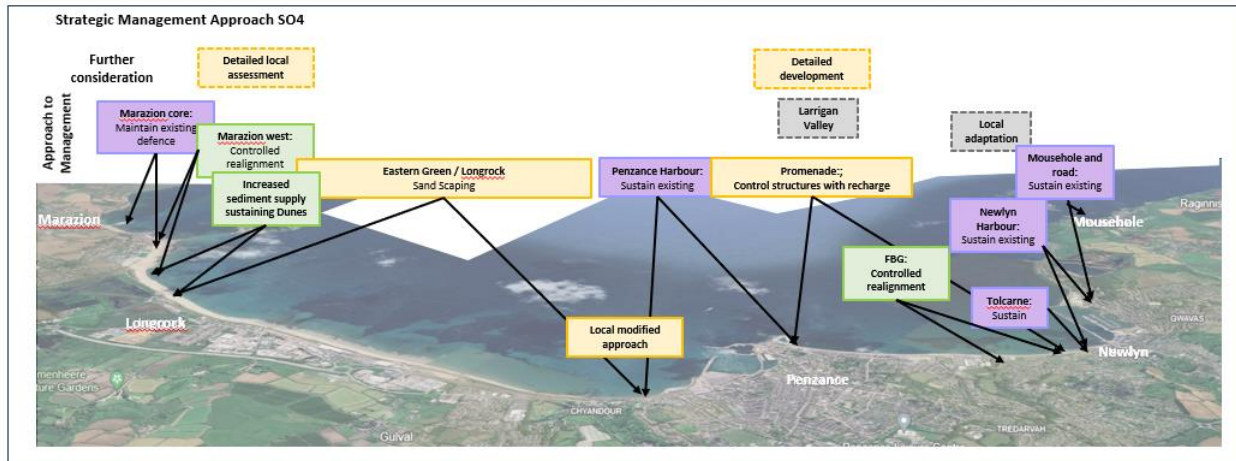
The strategy is being developed by the consultants Royal HaskoningDHV, and pulls together a number of studies and initiatives from communities, planning documents as well as objectives linked to the Shoreline Management Plan and the designated sites. It models scenarios and develops a range of options and then appraises these in relation to health and security, the natural environment, the economy and flood and coastal erosion risk management. As part of this, there has been engagement with the key stakeholders including major players such as Network Rail, National Highways, South West Water, local harbours and landowners.

A number of options have been considered as follows:

- Option 1: Do nothing;
- Option 2: Sustain existing defences with responsive management;
- Option 3: Adaptive management
- Option 4. Adaptive management with sand scaping.

Option 4 is the preferred option (see Figure 2) and includes wide-ranging actions to maintain existing defences, realign the shoreline around Marazion, introduce sandscaping in Mount's Bay and to carry out further management of sea defences through Penzance. With an overall estimated short-term cost of £126million, the project will have significant impacts and will be extremely complicated to deliver as it will need to work closely with infrastructure providers such as Network Rail, South West Water, the Harbour Authorities, and all parts of the community in much more detail.

Figure 2: Preferred option (from Cornwall Council)



Cornwall Council and the Environment Agency plan to undertake public and community consultation into the preferred option from late Spring 2024 onwards. This will need to carefully engage with all sectors of the wider communities as well as critical infrastructure organisations and statutory bodies.

During the Cornwall 3Cs project period, the Mount's Bay Project was at a very sensitive stage involving its own consultations with the key stakeholders and whilst it was not possible to work with them given the timescales that they were working to, stakeholder engagement was undertaken to better explore some of the issues and actions required for the next steps.

5 INTEGRATION WITH THE MOUNT'S BAY CHARTER OF THE SEA

During 2022-3, Cornwall Wildlife Trust ran a community engagement initiative to identify local priorities entitled 'Charter of the Sea'. This proved very successful, involving many people of all ages and backgrounds, and together they identified priorities around pollution, tourism, education, fisheries, wildlife disturbance, inland impact, engagement, local authorities, marine protection areas and climate change. Participants identified a huge range of actions that could be undertaken ranging from practical interventions to lobbying for change and awareness raising. It will be important to build on this in taking integrated action forward for the area.

6 FINDINGS FROM STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Discussions took place with six key officers from the following organisations:

- Cornwall Council
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency

The findings have been built into the discussion but have been anonymised.

Need for a single conversation: Respondents stressed the need for a single conversation that brings in the communities at an early stage, particularly in relation to community adaptation and resilience as well as coastal and marine nature recovery. Some thought that whilst the Council and the Environment Agency should have oversight, that this would be better undertaken by an independent facilitator.

Scale and complexity of work needed: respondents highlighted the sheer scale and complexity of work needed, giving examples of where delicate conversations would need to take place with landowners over effects of proposals on their assets and the interface with environmental designations and planning policies. Others highlighted how initiative would have a knock-on effect to further down the coast or out to sea; this being particularly the case when dune management is being considered where it is difficult to isolate it from sediments coming from land which in itself is a product of land-use.

Marine nature recovery and natural capital should be included from the start: There was concern that environmental gain which could provide multiple benefits, was not being considered from the beginning as an intrinsic part of the interventions and it was proposed that a one or two key interventions could be identified as early wins.

7 NEXT STEPS

With the completion of the Mounts Bay Coastal Strategy expected later in 2024, the next steps for this area of work are to ensure that local communities and other stakeholders are fully involved in identifying marine and coastal nature recovery opportunities within Mounts Bay, and to ensure that this approach is integrated into the overall strategy through the following steps:

- Bring together the key stakeholders to gather data and identify the potential to deliver nature restoration and build knowledge capital.
- Trial opportunity mapping for Mounts Bay through a collaborative stakeholder driven approach.
- Support embedding/integration of local Marine Nature Recovery Action Plan within Mounts Bay Coastal Strategy and also the key learnings from the Marine Natural Capital Environmental Assessment Pilot.

8 REFERENCES

Harrison, D. S. (2023). *Cornwall Climate Risk Assessment*.

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