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Porthmadog – the wider context

Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) set out a shared strategic approach for managing the coastline from coastal flooding and erosion risks. Porthmadog is within the West of Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2). This document states a preferred policy at this location of “Hold the Line” (HTL) up to 2105. This means the aim is to maintain or change the existing standard of coastal defence protection.



Natural Environment

The study area forms an important blend of coastal, wetland and woodland habitats that act as green corridors into surrounding countryside. The environmental importance of this area is reflected in the large number of protected habitats and species that are shown on board 2.

Many of these are of National and International importance and these too are being threatened by the effects of flooding and climate change.

Landscape

The outstanding natural beauty of the area with its close association with the Snowdonia National Park needs careful consideration when project planning.

Recreation

This study area offers many opportunities for diverse recreational pastimes. These too will be carefully considered, as they are of vital importance for people’s health and wellbeing, and also bring income to the community.

Livelihoods

Landowners and farmers may have noticed that the environment is changing and we want to hear your adaptation concerns and ideas.

Historic Environment

The area surrounding Porthmadog has a long and fascinating history and is one where humans have chosen to settle since the earliest of times. The coastline here has changed frequently over time, indeed much of the area we are looking at today was only reclaimed from the sea in 1811 when William Maddocks built the cob across the estuary mouth.

Importantly, this means that many of the current water management features, such as banks, sluices and flood gates have historical importance and approvals may be required to work on them.

Many of the existing structures are also linked to the slate industry, the importance of which has been recently recognised by granting the new World Heritage sites of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales.

We have commissioned a specialist archaeological study to help us design future changes while making sure we respect the past.

Coastal Squeeze

Where man-made structures have been built to protect communities and land from coastal flooding and erosion, such as sea walls or rock revetments, the habitat may be prevented from moving landward as sea levels rise whilst it continues to be lost from the lower shore. This is known as ‘coastal squeeze’.

Coastal squeeze means that the saltmarsh size and function is reducing over time, along with the habitats and species that it supports. A lot of saltmarsh habitat is legally protected therefore we are required to create new saltmarsh to offset losses in the future with sea level rise.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for environmental improvements that we can help to deliver through our work, please do let us know on the feedback forms.