

Empowering local stakeholders in coastal flood risk management in England

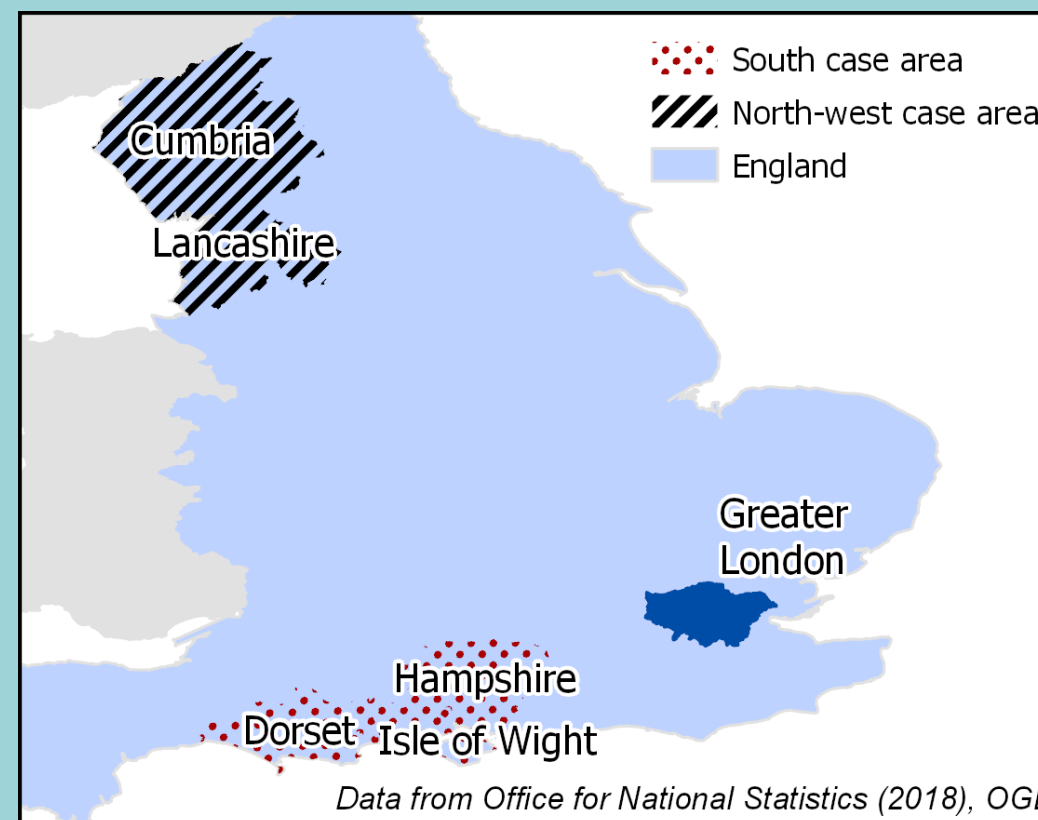
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Introduction

Flood risk management (FRM) responsibilities are increasingly placed on a local level in England [1]. However, there are **multiple challenges** facing local stakeholders in **implementing coastal FRM policies** across planning, engineering and insurance, e.g. rising sea levels will increase the number of people exposed to frequent flooding in England [2].

This study examines the challenges that face institutions and organisations in implementing coastal FRM policy locally in England.

Case studies



Both case studies encompass (a) urban conglomerations with current defence spending, and (b) rural communities with legacy assets but less spending today

Methods

- Literature review:** questions about FRM costs, timing, power, responsibility, acceptability, equity, and effectiveness [3]
- Semi-structured interviews** with stakeholders with significant *influence* and *importance* to local coastal FRM
- Thematic analysis:** an iterative process of analysing theory- and data-based coding

Stakeholders: Local Authority engineers & planners, engineering consultants, insurers and local groups

Results



Planners



Engineers



Insurers

Distance between insurers and other stakeholders

"I don't think we're close to the flood risk management."
– Insurance industry representative, England

Self-reflective responsibility to increase role in engaging households in FRM

Households' role: commenting on plans & creating future visions for the coast

"It's hard to keep ahead of the curve when you don't know where the curve is going in the first place."
– Local authority planner, north-west

Dual challenge:
(1) Managing risk through non-statutory documents to politically unacceptable goals
(2) Need more resources to manage for climate change

There are adaptation options in policies not actualisable in practice.

"You couldn't legitimately do it: the only thing you could do to completely resolve the issue is to relocate the seaside towns."
– Local authority engineer, south

Engineers are one player in management that requires the awareness and involvement of other sectors and households.

Discussion

Scheme-by-scheme approaches to FRM remain prevalent. After the decision "not to defend" there is little policy support.

Challenges:

- spatial planning to include flood risk in local plans
- integrate insurers into policy development & implementation.

Clarity needed on:

- the responsibility that private individuals should have in FRM
- who should be engaging the public

Conclusions

To increase empowerment of local stakeholders to be future ready, there is a need for:

- (1) visions that include resources & adaptability to future change
- (2) further integration of stakeholders
- (3) clear identification of households' responsibilities

References: [1] Begg, C., I. Callsen, C. Kuhlicke, and I. Kelman. 2017. 'The Role of Local Stakeholder Participation in Flood Defence Decisions in the UK and Germany'. *Journal of Flood Risk Management*. [2] Sayers, P., E.C. Penning-Rowsell, and M. Horritt. 2017. 'Flood Vulnerability, Risk, and Social Disadvantage: Current and Future Patterns in the UK'. *Regional Environmental Change*. [3] Tompkins, E.L., R. Few, and K. Brown. 2008. 'Scenario-Based Stakeholder Engagement: Incorporating Stakeholders Preferences into Coastal Planning for Climate Change'. *Journal of Environmental Management* 88, no. 4: 1580–92.