

E: Seascapes

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E.5 Seascapes Characterisation#

E.5.1 Introduction to Seascapes#

England's Historic Seascapes is a programme of projects funded through the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund, as distributed by English Heritage (prior to the creation of [Historic England](#) who are now responsible for this), to develop a nationally-applicable method for assessing and mapping the historic character of our present coastal and marine environment: Historic Seascape Characterisation (HSC). In doing so, HSC will extend to the coastal and marine zones the principles of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) already applied over much of England's land area.

HSC methodology will build the strategic-level framework necessary to allow more fully contextualised responses to the marine aggregate dredging licensing process and other licensing and development proposals. On a wider scale, HSC will benefit historic environment inputs to the coming system of marine spatial planning, enabling area-based representation of the typical cultural processes that have shaped our coastal and marine environment at landscape scale and allowing its manipulation alongside other environmental databases.

Development of a robust, nationally-relevant HSC methodology presents many challenges which have been addressed through two rounds of pilot projects, their areas selected to include a broad range of the historic and management contexts encountered in England's coastal and marine zones. Those projects, with links to their resources, are:

Liverpool Bay and waters off the Fylde

The Solent and waters off the Isle of Wight

Southwold to Clacton

Withernsea to Skegness

Scarborough to Hartlepool

The related methodologies resulting from those pilots underwent detailed review in a Round 3 Consolidation Project to assess and draw together into a national methodology those options identified as most effective in characterising the historic dimension of our coastal and marine environments in accord with the principles of HLC. That project's National HSC Method Statement, issued in March 2008, provides guidance for future practitioners on the structure and implementation of the resulting National HSC Methodology. Some practical recommendations arising from the initial implementation of that Method across the coasts and seas of north east England were incorporated into a revision of the HSC Method Statement (HSC: Demonstrating the Method Project) in 2010.

In late 2009/2010 four projects were funded to to implement the revised national HSC Method, extending and applying the principles already underpinning Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) to a range of areas of the English coast, seas and adjacent waters:

Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary

The Irish Sea (English sector)

Newport to Clacton and Adjacent Water

Hastings to Purbeck and Adjacent Waters

For more information on the England's Historic Seascapes Programme, please visit the Historic England Seascape pages <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/research/current-research/discovery/landscapes-and-areas/characterisation/historic-seascape-character/>.