

# Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre



Canolfan Monitro Arfordirol Cymru  
Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre



## First Annual Report 2010/11

May 2011

## Executive Summary

Approximately 60% (1.9million) of the population of Wales live on, or near to, the coast and 75% of the coastline is designated for its environmental importance. The coastal and marine environment supports an estimated 93,000 jobs, with visits to the coast accounting for over 40% of overnight stays in Wales (Visit Wales, the Tourism and Marketing Division of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), 2008). An estimated 415km of man-made sea defence structures exist to protect over £8billion of assets from coastal erosion and tidal flooding and replacing these structures would cost about £750million (Wales Audit Office (WAO), 2009).

The **Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre (WCMC)** is funded by WAG and was established following recognition by the Wales Coastal Groups Forum (WCGF) of the need to improve the co-ordination of coastal monitoring data collection, storage and analysis in Wales. Its aim is to establish a framework necessary to provide good quality information on coastal change that will help inform flood and coastal risk management decisions. Hosted by Gwynedd Council for an initial three year period, direction for the WCMC is given by a Project Board of key stakeholder representation which in turn reports to the WCGF composed of the Chairs of each Coastal Group in Wales plus key stakeholders.

This report describes the evolution of the WCMC project, its original terms of reference and subsequent objectives that have been determined during this first year of operation. The policy context for the project and the risks which it seeks to address are identified.

Stakeholder consultation throughout 2010/11 has clarified past and present day coastal monitoring practices and enabled assessment of the existing baseline situation. This baseline reflects the data sources that the WCMC project team are currently aware of and may not be fully comprehensive; stakeholder engagement and collaborative working is key to the success of the WCMC project and additional quality data contributions are always welcomed. The baseline situation will direct initial elements of the 2011/12 programme to catalogue and securely store existing coastal data, identify gaps in existing data to be filled as a priority and to consider any future need for analysis of historic data.

The majority of the WCMC resource in 2011/12 will be invested in the design of a future risk-based, strategic monitoring programme for the Welsh coastline that aims to achieve best value for money through greater co-ordination of coastal monitoring practices beyond those that presently exist. Options for this programme will be submitted in application for funding to enable programme launch and initial delivery in 2012/13.

The report recognises scope for synergies with more established English strategic coastal monitoring programmes and identifies potential opportunities and efficiencies that the WCMC could introduce to improve existing monitoring practices. There are technical and financial benefits associated with increased standardisation of coastal data collection, quality control and analysis efforts.

As the knowledge base and data holdings of the WCMC expand, the project will seek to utilise monitoring data and analysis to improve current understanding of coastal processes and risks, to inform the coastal defence design process and to develop an evidence base to support management decisions at all levels along the Welsh shoreline.

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For further information about the WCMC or to contribute data  
to the project, please contact:

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