

£19million to sort out Southend's sea defences



£19million to sort out Southend's sea defences

First published 1 hour ago in [News](#) by [Ian Burbidge](#)

SOUTHEND is likely to get £19million in Government funding to help it bolster sea defences.

Whitehall announced £196million of funding earlier this week to pay for a long-term programme to improve Thames estuary coastal defences, though Government departments have been reluctant to say how much each area might get.

However, Southend councillors say they understand the borough will be in line for £19million over the next 20 years.

Martin Terry, who leads the Independent group on the council, also sits on the regional flood coastal committee, which has discussed the funding.

He said: “The money goes into a long-term strategy to raise sea defences in the area in coming years.

“We will need to start work in the coming years on raising sea defences by about 300-400 millimetres (1ft- 16ins).

“This is being done as an interim measure until we can assess the impact of global warming and rising tides.

“By about 2040, the Government will look at it again, but this is to protect homes in the meantime.”

The borough is likely to get so much cash because experts say most of Southend seafront and Old [Leigh](#) is at risk of flooding and d e f e n c e s need to be improved .

But, officials are suggesting the seawall at Old Leigh should not be raised, how-ever, as this would block residents’ views of the estuary and hit the fishing and tourist trades. Instead they say other schemes should be considered.

Yesterday, the Echo reported [Canvey](#) was to get £20million to upgrade its flood defences, because the whole island was deemed to be at risk.

The £19million coastal defence funding would be in addition to cash for inland flooding projects also announced, including £400,000 to protect 160 homes in Southend by bolstering Eastwood Brook.

The Environment Agency has also confirmed £3.3million will still go to build a new seawall in [Shoebury](#).

However, in the wake of the row over the previous Tory administration’s hugely-unpopular proposals – currently on hold – the agency has said this will be subject to the council managing to come up with a satisfactory scheme.

Announcing the Thames Estuary scheme, Environment Agency chairman Sir Philip Dilley said: “This first-ever long-term investment programme will protect 17,134 properties in this region and save the national economy £2.7billion by 2021.

“The lifetime benefits of this investment will be even higher at more than £30billion.

“New schemes may also be added as the programme progresses.”