

Benefits of protecting London from the sea

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Options have been investigated for the future of protecting London from flooding from the sea. Economic analyses have shown that improving the existing flood defences and, in 2070, constructing a new Thames Barrier downstream from the existing one are the “front runner” options for tackling the increase in flood risk that is anticipated in the future.

The very high standard of protection now in the Thames Estuary, and the robustness of the existing flood defences assets, mean that major new interventions will not be needed for some time (i.e. until 2070). Besides, improving the standard of protection now to meet the current level of risk is not cost-efficient. The extra benefit gained is generally not worth its costs, until climate and socio-economic change begin to alter that situation by creating additional risk from 2050 and towards 2070. There is time, therefore, to monitor the situation and carefully plan the adaptive measures that are needed now and in the medium term.

Source: Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013. Natural Hazards 66: 1383–1404.

Photo: Damian Moore (www.flickr.com)