



Protecting London from the sea: strategic alternatives and their economic implications

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Sea level rise and storm surges pose a significant threat to London, despite the construction of the Thames Barrier in the 1970s/1980s. By the 2050s/70s, not only might the barrier be insufficient to protect London from severe storms, but also many of the associated sea walls and other structures will be nearing the end of their lives. This issue has been investigated by the UK Environment Agency in a £20 million project to determine when and what could be done to forestall the risk of flooding, whilst developing sustainable solutions for the management of water levels in the Estuary. This paper analyses the risk of flooding to the year 2100 using official forecasts of sea level rise, and examines the costs of benefits of different strategic options. One of the conclusions from this analysis is that we can wait to make some decisions about major new engineering works, but that we must in the meantime strive to reduce the increase in flood risk that the development of London and its economy is generating.