

Report subject	<b>BCP Seafront Strategy</b>
Meeting date	13 April 2022
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The new BCP Seafront Strategy sets out a bold and exciting ambition for a world class seafront leisure offer across 15 miles of coast and 26 miles of harbour-side landscape and is aligned to the Council's Big Plan.</p> <p>The report also sets out the principles and criteria for prioritising future investments in the near, mid and longer term life of the strategy</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(a) The BCP Seafront Strategy is approved for adoption by Cabinet</b></li> <li><b>(b) The principals and criteria for investment prioritisation within the strategy is supported by Cabinet.</b></li> <li><b>(c) Any Cabinet recommendations and final amendments to this report to be delegated to the Service Director to implement in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Tourism &amp; Active Health and Culture and Vibrant Places.</b></li> </ul>
Reason for recommendations	<p>Provides a bold vision for investment in infrastructure, public spaces, health and well-being, the environment, and places to eat, drink and stay.</p> <p>Provides a projects prioritisation framework to support investment to grow and diversify the offer and protect and increase revenue streams</p> <p>Provides a guide / prospectus to attract commercial leisure investment</p> <p>Provides a strategic context for seafront development to support future planning applications</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Mohan Iyengar, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Active Health Beverley Dunlop, Cabinet Member for Culture and Vibrant Places
Corporate Director	Jess Gibbons, Chief Operating Officer
Report Authors	Andrew Emery, Resort Development & Strategy Manager
Wards	Not applicable

Classification	For Adoption
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## Background

- 1.1 The new BCP Seafront Strategy sets out a unified vision, ambition and set of priorities for investment in leisure across the whole of the BCP seafront and harbours in Poole and Christchurch.
- 1.2 The Seafront Strategy is intended to be live and evolving - with the flexibility to respond to new pressures, opportunities and proposals as they emerge during its lifespan.
- 1.3 With people, well-being and quality of living at its heart, the Seafront Strategy is intended to provide the foundation for building the worldwide renown and reputation our coastline deserves.
- 1.4 Ambition to establish a world-class seafront is fully aligned with the Council's Big Plan for the city region and supports a wide range of Corporate Strategy priorities.
- 1.5 Our Blue Flag award-winning seafront enjoys a leading reputation as one of the best in the UK and provides a key reason many people move to BCP to work, live and visit. The new Seafront Strategy and outline 5-year investment plan recognises the need for significant prioritisation on improving infrastructure and essential amenities to maintain this reputation whilst mapping out how the Council can take the seafront to the next level in quality and become truly world-class. This will have significant positive benefits, helping to attract wider investment and new businesses to the local economy.
- 1.6 Adopting a clear Seafront Strategy is critical. The seafront provides highly valued community space for local residents, a diverse range of natural habitats and sits at the heart of a £1.1bn GDP local tourism industry. It also generates significant direct revenue to the Council, helping to fund wider services and benefits for the community.
- 1.7 At the heart of the new Seafront Strategy is a recognition of the diverse landscapes and identities of different parts of the seafront. The strategy identifies 18 distinct 'character areas' along the 15 miles of coastal seafront and 26 miles of harbour edges, setting out how each has a distinct community and sense of place. The strategy seeks to ensure future investments strengthen these identities and communities and contribute to an overall sense of 'place'.
- 1.8 Extensive public consultation took place during summer 2021 to inform the final draft of the Strategy and the criteria for forward investment prioritisation. Consultation included public on-line surveys, workshops with key stakeholders and on-site engagement sessions. Full results of the consultation this can be found in Appendix 2.
- 1.9 Consultation identified over 100 potential improvement projects, across 18 individual character areas along the coast along with a review of operational management policies along the seafront.
- 1.10 The strategy takes the form of an interactive online map, and the final, post - consultation draft for adoption seen in **Appendix 1** (also linked [here](#)).
- 1.11 Whilst the strategy is primarily focused on the future of the leisure and visitor offer, it is also cross-cutting across a range of other services, strategies and plans. These are reflected and referenced throughout.

## **Delivering on the Seafront Strategy ambitions: Principals and criteria for future investment decision making**

- 2.1 Priorities identified through the consultation process have informed the development of a set of principals and criteria to be applied to investment prioritisation over the life of the Seafront Strategy.
- 2.2 To guide and prioritise the decisions we make, and ultimately deliver our vision, we will focus on five key criteria for decision making:
  - Protection of the natural coastline and biodiversity
  - Leadership in the environmental challenge
  - Movement towards ‘active lives’ and inclusivity
  - Boost for creativity, enterprise and new investment
  - Deliverable within financial, economic, political, social factors
- 2.3 Projects for investment will be brought forward on an individual basis, following review and recommendation by the Seafront Development Board and supported by the Big Plan Delivery Board
- 2.4 Significant momentum already exists around continual investment in the BCP seafront with recent projects including improvements at Bournemouth Pier Approach, Shore Road and Branksome Chine; Bournemouth Beach Lodges and Highcliffe Zig Zag.
- 2.5 The Council will not be able to deliver all of the outcomes and investments on its own. It will require a co-ordinated multi-partner approach with private sector investors, community groups and other funding bodies.

### **Near term: 2 – 4 years**

- 3.1 Focus will be on fixing the basics and re-establishing the identity of our seafront by prioritising recovery and adaptation. We will bring forward plans to improve safety, access, and accessibility, expected facilities supporting health and hygiene and coastal protection works.
- 3.2 We will be activating public spaces with a vibrant seasonal hospitality, leisure and events-based offer, encouraging entrepreneurship and inspiring healthier and sustainable living.
- 3.3 We will be working to secure investment in our beach hut offer to secure long-term income and support reinvestment in services.
- 3.4 We will be prioritise reductions in the carbon footprint of our buildings, services and day-to-day operations
- 3.5 Incorporating improvements to access, movement and safety across the seafront within development and site management proposals, particularly around beach access, community spaces and facilities and promenade byelaws.
- 3.6 We will also continue to proceed with the current pipeline of viable projects, which include:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Current status</b>
Environmental Innovation Hub, Durley Chine	Funded. Construction
Southbourne redevelopment (Former Bistro on the Beach)	Funded. Detailed design & meanwhile site use
Beach House Café, Mudeford Sandspit	Funded. Detailed design
Toft Beach Box Park	Funded. Pre-planning design

Canford Cliffs Pavilion	Funded. Post planning commercial review
Hengistbury Head Outdoor Education Centre	Options review
Sandbanks Pavilion	Pre-investment case feasibility design
Poole Quay	Pre-investment case master planning & meanwhile activation (links to Poole Museum)
Beach based seasonal food, beverage and leisure developments, between Bournemouth West Cliff and Boscombe Pier	Phased implementation and pre-investment case feasibility (Digital Prom utilities upgrade)
Coast protection beach management, flood defence and salt marsh restoration works	Phased delivery
Enabling external partners to re-invest in current leisure sites eg: Happyland, Sandbanks & Branksome cafés plus kiosks, Westbeach restaurant, Harry Ramsdens, Hot Rocks, Bournemouth Lifeguards (Joseph Steps)	Various
Beach Hut harmonisation & SPV	Feasibility
Cliff Management Strategy	Under development
Festival Coast Live! & major event programming	Delivery
Harbourside Park masterplan	Feasibility
Bournemouth International Centre	Feasibility
Review potential access improvements around, Highcliffe Beaches	Feasibility

### **Mid-term: 3 – 7 years**

- 4.1 We will prioritise securing and evolving the identity of our seafront by investing in key infrastructure, public spaces and promenades, nature spaces, buildings, beach huts and attractions. These investments will support year-round activities and usage and reduce the Council's seafront operational carbon footprint to net zero.
- 4.2 We will also prioritise facilities that support healthy-outdoor living for all
- 4.3 We will prioritise events with a cultural and creative edge
- 4.4 We will evolve brand identity, marketing and comms to attract year-round use and more higher spending stay visitors over day-trippers.

### **Longer-term: 6 – 10 years**

- 5.1 We will be on course to deliver change in major landmark sites – transforming the identity for a new and broader audience of residents, visitors and organisations, nationally and internationally.
- 5.2 We will prioritise major infrastructure to future proof our seafront for the long term
- 5.3 Review and update major policies, byelaws and operational management plans

- 5.4 Bring forward proposals for major hub sites to support sustainable year round accessibility, use, events and gatherings, such as our piers and key access hubs.

### **Summary of financial implications**

- 6.1 The criteria informing future investment decisions is presented at section 2 (above)
- 6.2 Funding for these projects will be subject to future individual business case development and consideration by the Council,
- 6.3 The range of proposed investments will have significant impact on the Council's revenue income and expenditure, particularly in relation to securing existing revenue through investment in life-expired assets and generating new or growing existing revenue streams through new commercial facilities. Replacement of tired facilities will also present opportunities to reduce expenditure via more efficient building design and reductions in energy usage and maintenance burden. Some projects, particularly public realm investments, may result in new revenue pressures around maintenance and management but will be designed to balance this with attracting new commercial investment and increased revenue generation through new footfall and visitor spend.

### **Summary of legal and planning implications**

- 7.1 The new BCP Seafront Strategy provides a strategic steer for future investment decisions. It replaces the seafront strategies of the preceding Council's (pre-BCP). It will be used to inform and support new proposals and planning assessments in light of market viability and evolving visitor demands during the life of the strategy.
- 7.2 Individual title, lease arrangements and covenants will need to be assessed to determine feasibility as specific projects are brought forward. Resources to undertake searches and provide guidance will need to be built into project feasibility studies.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

- 8.1 Delivery of future investments will require additional project delivery resources. Implications will be costed and set out within individual work programmes as they are brought forward for consideration. Delivery at pace and scale will also require additional support services from legal, estates, procurement, communications and project management teams.

### **Summary of equality implications**

- 9.1 The majority of impacts arising from the strategy for protected characteristic groups centre around improvements to access, movement and safety whilst at the seafront. As such, the strategy will have a number of positive outcomes for those with physical disabilities.
- 9.2 A programme of investment in public toilets and changing facilities is proposed in the seafront strategy. Where development takes place, investment in individual cubicle unisex facilities opening directly out on to the promenades will be encouraged to benefit the widest range of protected characteristic groups as well as ensuring safe spaces for all.
- 9.3 The Strategy aims to encourage investment in the range and quality of the food and drink offer at all price-points, appealing to the widest range of social economic groups, to include provision of a wider range of high quality seasonal catering outlets between the piers.
- 9.4 Further work will be undertaken to understand barriers to access to the seafront, particularly by residents who rarely visit or enjoy the facilities on their doorstep. Previous consultations have identified barriers to access to the seafront for some socio-economic groups due to affordability and frequency of public transport, limited leisure time or awareness of benefits rather than a lack of facilities or 'things to do'. As such, collaborative work remains ongoing particularly across transport strategy and education.

- 9.5 Outside of the conurbation, visitor research has been commissioned to understand the evolving tourism markets and, specifically, better understand reasons why holidaymakers and day visitors choose not to visit the BCP area. The results of this research will be available March 2022 and will inform future seafront investment proposals in detail.
- 9.6 A full copy of the completed EIA can be found at **Appendix 3**

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

- 10.1 Overall, the Seafront Strategy sets out a wide range of positive contributions to sustainability, considered within a Decision Impact Assessment provided at **Appendix 4**.
- 10.2 Positive impacts include:
- a. Proposals to introduce new renewable energy generation projects
  - b. Reduced carbon emissions and maintenance from highly energy efficient new facilities and infrastructure
  - c. Improvements to waste management
  - d. Climate adaptive and demountable new facilities
  - e. Improvements to sustainable transport and access across the seafront
  - f. Improvements to the natural landscape and habitats
  - g. Promotion of new community facilities, volunteering and education initiatives
  - h. Investments promoting health and wellbeing ranging from beach sports and water sports, through to yoga, walking trails, interpretation and improved access and seating

### **Summary of public health implications**

- 11.1 A key aim and objective for the strategy is to deliver sustainable investment in community-based facilities and infrastructure to support access for all and well-being.
- 11.2 Support for development of community facilities and the encouragement of walking, cycling, beach and water sports through concessions, community spaces and interpretation trails will have a positive impact on wellness and mental health for residents and visitors.
- 11.3 Community group access will also include ongoing support for and development of charity/ community run beach hut facilities which offer opportunities for further engagement and work with armed forces groups as well as adult and children's services to improve access to leisure at the seafront.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

- 12.1 Risk 1: Political/ stakeholder support for the strategy.
- Mitigation: Extensive public consultation to inform the draft strategy. A further sense check exercise with key internal stakeholders, Future Place and an engagement event with all Elected Members has taken place subsequent to CMB & Cabinet review/ recommendation in February. Individual projects will be subject to further engagement exercises as they come forward
- 12.2 Risk 2: Deliverability of proposed priority investment themes. Risks include affordability/ viability; uncertainty around supply and construction with significant inflationary pressures at the present time; securing consents and permissions for investments to take place; market forces impacting on aspirations in terms of changes in supply/ demand for proposed new services and facilities.
- Mitigation: the Strategy takes a far more flexible approach than the SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) approach taken previously. Individual

investments will come forward subject to full business case development taking account of evolving risks and impacts at that time.

## **Background papers**

### **Appendices**

1. Online [Link](#) to BCP Seafront Strategy
2. BCP Seafront Strategy consultation results analysis
3. EIA Report and Action Plan, BCP Seafront Strategy
4. Decision Impact Assessment, sustainability