

Appendix 1 – DRAFT BCP Seafront Strategy 2024

Welcome

The Seafront Strategy, adopted by BCP Council in April 2022, has been reviewed to update the vision, objectives and key priority areas for attracting future investment and improvement.

The Seafront Strategy is intended as a live and evolving framework – with the flexibility to respond to new pressures, opportunities and proposals as they emerge during its lifespan. By putting people, their wellbeing and the quality of their lives at its heart, we believe it will provide the foundation for building the worldwide renown and reputation our coastline deserves.

The Seafront Strategy was developed from extensive consultation and engagement with over 4,000 members of the public, community and business groups and agencies via online surveys, group workshops, face-to-face roadshow events and visitor surveys throughout 2021.

The strategy is used to identify and prioritise areas for investment by the Council and external partners. It also brings together a range of outcomes identified by overlapping policies, strategies and management plans for the surrounding blue and green spaces at the coast. The Strategy provides material guidance for planning considerations and is aligned to the draft BCP Local Plan.

The Seafront Strategy website (<https://haveyoursay.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/bcp-seafront-strategy>) contains links to consultation results and the many creative suggestions posted by members of the public, expressing their ideas and thoughts for the future of the seafront leisure offer. Many of the consultation comments relate to day-to-day operational issues or the development of regulations and byelaws including cycling, scooters, camping, fires, water sports and littering. A review of these policies will be carried forward through the implementation of the Seafront Strategy.

Further Information

Should you have any further comments or queries, please feel free to contact us via email at:

seafrontprojects@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

Introduction

This Seafront Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions to enhance our Seafront, prioritising the protection of our natural environment, responding to climate emergency and supporting the distinctive identities of our coastline, whilst enabling sensitive inward investment to support sustainable, safe and healthy communities.



Seafront Extent

Delivering on this ambition, the revised Seafront Strategy updates previously adopted plans and to prioritise key areas for attracting investment.

Much of our coastal leisure infrastructure requires significant investment to maintain and meet the needs and expectations of current and future generations of beach users. Our coastline is also highly vulnerable and sensitive to climate change, and we need to be flexible and responsive as we move towards a zero-carbon future.

Our 40 miles of coast and harbour side encompasses a wide range of habitats and densities of development. A one-size fits all approach to investment is not appropriate. The strategy takes a character area approach, recognising the unique communities and landscapes and a sliding scale of approach to intervention that preserves and enhances our natural environment whilst also improving accessibility and access in general to services and leisure facilities.

The seafront provides highly valued community space for 500,000 local residents and a diverse range of internationally important natural habitats, geology and archaeology, and sits at the heart of our £1.1bn GDP local tourism industry. It also generates significant revenue to the Council, helping to fund wider services for the community.

This Strategy is influenced by:

- BCP Corporate Plan
- The emerging BCP Local Plan
- Poole & Christchurch Bay Shoreline Management Plan (2011)
- Poole Bay, Poole Harbour and Wareham FCERM Strategy (2014)
- Poole Bay Beach Management Scheme (ongoing)
- Poole Bridge to Hunger Hill Flood Defence Scheme (ongoing)
- Christchurch Bay & Harbour FCERM Strategy (currently in development)
- BCP Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan
- Emerging priorities for the Destination Development and Events Strategies

- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Consultation draft Nov 2021
- BCP Health & Well-being Strategy 2020-2023 (BCP Council, 2020)
- BCP Local Transport Plan (in preparation by BCP Council)
- BCP Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2021 – 2026
- BCP Corporate Strategy
- Dorset Physical Activity Strategy 2018-2033 (in preparation by Active Dorset/PHD)
- MMO South Marine Plan
- BCP Water sports Needs Assessment 2021
- BCP Climate Action Plan 2050 (draft consultation)
- BCP Cultural Compact 2021
- Mudeford Sandbank Management Plan 2014 – 2024
- Hengistbury Head Management Plan 2011
- Sustaining Poole's Seafront SPD 2015
- Bournemouth Seafront Strategy 2013
- BCP Seafront Strategy Statement 2020
- Poole Quays Forum Neighbourhood Plan (2016)
- Sandbanks Peninsular Neighbourhood Plan (draft 2023)
- Highcliffe and Walkford Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2028
- Christchurch Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Survey results (Sept 2021)

Vision

This Strategy aims to:

Enhance our Seafront, prioritising the protection of our natural environment, responding to climate emergency and supporting the distinctive identities of our coastline, whilst enabling sensitive inward investment, employment, community use, wellbeing, and improving access, inclusivity and sustainable tourism to support sustainable, safe and healthy communities.

Aims & Objectives

- Work with partners to identify and deliver a net gain in biodiversity across the natural coastal environment
- Removing barriers for all our communities to access inclusive services and facilities with a particular focus on young people and those with disabilities
- Achieve carbon neutrality for all Council seafront operations by 2030 and work with partners to ensure all seafront activities become carbon neutral before 2045, in line with the Council's Climate Emergency commitments
- Maintain and enhance the distinctive identity of the seafront character areas, supporting community pride in our public spaces
- Unlock potential to encourage external investment in new leisure attractions to manage growth and year-round footfall in sustainable areas of the seafront
- Encourage external investment in new leisure attractions to manage growth, employment and year-round footfall between Bournemouth and Boscombe Piers and in support of town centre revitalisation
- Maintain income to support Council services enabling local communities to shape the services that matter to them and look for new opportunities for income generation that respect the natural environment and enhance its beauty

- Encourage active, healthy and independent lives by removing barriers for all our communities to access the seafront with a particular focus on young people and those with disabilities. We will also work to enable sports and wellbeing activities through community partnerships

Character Areas

Each coastal area is defined through its visual landscape, environmental sensitivity, accessibility, types of leisure use and intensity of development. Leisure activity clusters around hub sites at over 40 principal entry points onto the seafront. We have grouped them into 18 character areas which inform the nature of re-investment and development, appropriate to the scale and identity of each location.

Hamworthy - Turlin Moor

*"Turlin Moor offers a zone for the local community in the heart of this nature reserve.
A living landscape to contemplate, breathe in and call home"*

A residential area at the western boundary of the conurbation, overlooking Lytchett Bay. Poole Harbour's extensive mudflats, salt marshes, reedbeds, sand dunes, heathland and islands are of great importance to wildlife and bird populations, many of which are protected by a raft of national and international conservation designations including Ramsar, SPA and SSSI. There is a wealth of archaeological sites too representing late prehistoric, Iron Age and medieval human occupation.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Proposals within the Council's emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy to develop boardwalks, wayfinding and a cycle network connecting Turlin Moor to Sandbanks, via Holes Bay
- A reduction and not intensification of public use so as to reduce the disturbance to shoreline birds

Rockley Park

*"A holiday destination zone for families and young people offering a base to explore
one of the world's greatest natural harbours"*

Located on the edge of Ham Common Local Nature Reserve, Rockley Park is on long-lease to Haven Holidays and offers a range of family leisure facilities, including a caravan and lodge park, public amenities and a dog walking beach.

Rockley Water sports centre overlooks Poole Harbour and has developed strong educational links with local colleges to offer sports related training and qualifications.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Park operator-led focus on public safety measures and signage
- The continued importance of the holiday park and the educational benefits for the wider community of the activity centre
- Maintaining and improving public access to the beach
- The park owners are responsible for coastal defences, needed to ensure continued viability of the current leisure assets
- The wider Shoreline Management Plan and the Local Nature Reserve designation at Ham Common
- Investment in public and accessible toilets

Lake Pier & Ham Common

"A nature zone and beauty spot, far from the madding crowd, enjoyed by walkers and water sport enthusiasts"

Lake Pier has heritage value, originally constructed as a refuelling base for passenger flying boats pre and post-World War II, it is in need of significant structural repair. The beach is popular with locals and water sport enthusiasts and offers significant recreational value for local residents. The site features a car park, public toilets, Poole Harbour Canoe Club and access to walking trails across Ham Common Local Nature Reserve. The coastline is subject to natural erosion and the coastal defence policy is to allow for managed re-alignment.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Any proposals should be low-key and community focused in recognition that visitor numbers need to be managed at a low level to reduce impacts of erosion on the surrounding Ham Common nature reserve. The site should not be pro-actively promoted as part of the wider visitor offer
- Funding and engineering works are required to save or rebuild the pier structure as a local landmark would be welcomed. Some low-key opportunities exist to celebrate the heritage and biodiversity of this site through interpretation, trails and education
- Improvements to water safety messaging and signage
- Potential to introduce a small-scale seasonal catering kiosk offer and public and accessible toilet improvements to serve the local community
- Exploring options to improve disabled access to the beach
- Support community water sports activities

Hamworthy Beach

"A family zone, especially catering for locals to relax and play overlooking the harbour and islands"

A popular local beach offering panoramic views over the middle of Poole Harbour and off towards the distant Purbecks. The park and beach offers great recreational value and tranquillity away from the town centre and quayside.

Featuring a play park, outdoor exercise equipment, paddling pool, café, beach huts and water sports concession, the site has grown significantly in popularity in recent years and may continue to do so with the planned nearby regeneration of the Holes Bay former power station site creating up to 830 new homes and local employment opportunities.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Proposals to restore the sea wall and protect amenities
- Balance public realm improvements to improve access along the water's edge whilst protecting roosting and feeding birds in this sensitive area
- Maintain and develop the beach hut offer
- Wayfinding and cycling route links to the current power station site, Poole Quay and town centre
- Improvements to car park layout
- Development of community events within the park
- Support Green Infrastructure Strategy proposals to improve the outdoor education centre, café, toilet and play facilities
- The provision of quality interpretation and information displays, at this point of high footfall, reflecting the international importance of the ecology and archaeology of Poole Harbour

Poole Port & Quay

"Opportunity to further enhance a creative and cultural zone, home to the largest leisure marina in the country, and a vibrant working port. Where day trippers and holiday makers flock to explore and enjoy the harbour, café culture and heritage"

The ancient commercial heart of Poole, the Quay features a vibrant leisure mix of hospitality, visitor attractions, heritage and culture, harbour cruises, vessel hire and marina. The picturesque Quay also offers a year-round setting for events.

The Port and adjacent facilities support high value marine industry and is a principal transport hub for cruise ships and passenger ferries to France and the Channel Islands.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- The preparation of a co-ordinated vision and masterplan for the former industrial sites between the two bridges incorporating residential, commercial and cultural development together with waterside public access linking to the Quay as part of the proposed Poole Bridge to Hunger Hill Flood Defence Scheme
- Investment in the marine leisure offer including cruise sector and marina facilities bringing footfall and spend to the town centre
- Infrastructure growth, investment in public toilets and public realm improvements to better support year-round events along the Quay
- Explore viability options for seasonal water-taxi operations linking Poole Quay with Sandbanks and other seafront locations

Holes Bay

"A zone for walkers, runners and cyclists to loop around the intertidal bay. A great space for contemplation, bird watching and fishing activities"

A prime location for bird watching offering a paved walking and cycling route between Poole town centre and Upton Country Park. This landscape of intertidal saltmarsh and mudflats is surrounded by significant areas of grassland and woodland. It is managed in conjunction with Dorset Wildlife Trust as part of the Great Heath Living Landscapes.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Improved wayfinding, cycle and walking links around Holes Bay, linking Upton Country Park and future redevelopment of the Power Station site with Poole Quay and the wider shoreline route to Sandbanks, working in conjunction with the Poole Bridge to Hunger Hill Flood Defence Scheme
- Ongoing investment in Upton Country Park, restoring and enhancing historic landscapes and developing new visitor and educational facilities which connects to the unique shoreline setting of the Grade II* Upton House
- No active intervention in the north-west corner of Holes Bay, allowing for the natural evolution of intertidal habitats
- Restoration of salt-marsh habitat in the wider Holes Bay

Harbourside Park

"Opportunity to enhance a highly valued community zone for play, relaxation and promenading along the harbour"

A treasured local community open space close to Poole Park and town centre offering views across to the Purbecks. Harbourside Park comprises Whitecliff and Baiter and offers ample space for play and relaxation.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Masterplan development to improve local amenities and benefit wildlife, including improved walking and cycling infrastructure
- Improved sports, catering & toilet facilities
- An improved wildlife information offer together with investment in wardening and positive engagement with visitors to raise awareness and understanding of the natural environment

Evening Hill to Sandbanks

"Opportunity to celebrate a safe all action zone for water sports beginners and the more experienced with fabulous views over Brownsea Island, leading to a gateway to the South West Coast Path and Jurassic Coast"

A connecting route between Lilliput and Sandbanks, Shore Road and Banks Road offer unparalleled views of Poole Harbour and Brownsea Island. The route features good access for cyclists and walkers as well as on-street parking. Concessions operate from the roadside offering a range of paddle boarding, windsurfing and other water sport activities at Whitley Lake.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Connectivity, wayfinding and cycle lane improvements to link Sandbanks with Poole Quay and beyond
- Improving management of leisure around Whitley Lake and maintaining a balance between a sensitive marine environment and water sport activities, working closely with the Harbour Commissioners and other stakeholders
- The need for significant investment in the harbour wall and reductions to flood risk
- Facilities for water sports users including exploring potential for new public toilets
- Public realm improvements enhancing connection and access between the harbour and seafront at the junction of Shore Road
- Investment in quality information provision - interpreting the view and highlighting the importance of the wildlife of Poole Harbour

Sandbanks Beach

"Top zone for holiday makers, beach and water sport enthusiasts with its own unique residential community alongside one of Britain's most celebrated beaches"

One of the few UK beaches with an international profile. Sandbanks is rich with character and conservation value and a firm favourite with holiday makers. Featuring a wide, sandy beach and accessible rock groynes, a landscape of dunes and grasses is designated as a SNCI with a presumption against development and intensified use.

The promenade-based leisure amenities are isolated from the rest of the seafront with beach popularity heavily dependent on car park capacity, which, combined with the Haven ferry, can lead to significant traffic tailbacks during summer. The south-west tip of the peninsula is dominated by high value residential dwellings backing directly onto the public beach. With no promenade, access to Haven Point is limited. The beach offers a premium setting for events such as Beach Polo.

There is significant potential to improve the overall quality, range and ambition for the future leisure offer at Sandbanks including providing exemplar disabled accessible facilities down towards the water line. Currently, though, commercial leisure investment is highly constrained by the Borough of Poole Act 1986 covering Sandbanks Recreation Ground.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Development of a wider vision to improve the quality and identity of the destination leisure offer at Sandbanks recreation ground, including a review of the Borough of Poole Act 1986
- New and reconfigured beach hut development including maximising double-fronted views of both beach and harbour
- Development of a replacement high quality building for the life-expired Sandbanks Pavilion including options to contain a community hire space
- Explore within the masterplan the potential for new leisure facilities and catering outlets as part of an expanded village offer opposite the existing parade of shops
- Review sustainable transport, access and parking at Sandbanks recreation ground within the proposed future vision study
- Partial redevelopment of the corporation yard to provide enhanced leisure or beach hut facilities
- New equipped children's play, leisure, water sport attractions and infrastructure to support event activities
- Develop fully disabled accessible beach facilities including improved access to the waterline
- Investment in public toilets and beach showers
- Co-ordinated programme of investment in beach huts, including 'super huts'
- Explore options to connect the Sandbanks Peninsular with a ferry operation from Poole Quay
- Supporting investment to improve the quality of the hotel offer in the surrounding area
- Sustaining and expansion of the dune habitats, and the protection of rare species such as the Sand Lizard and winter bird populations
- Ongoing beach re-nourishment as part of the Poole Bay Beach Management Scheme

Shore Road

"A zone for families and couples, popular for holiday makers and water sports"

The Families Beach, sitting at the foot of the Poole Bay cliffs, Shore Road offers a gateway into the Chines section of the seafront. The beach has an urban feel with recently enhanced hub facilities and beach huts. A popular place to congregate to eat, drink and relax.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Supporting investment to improve the quality of the hotel offer in adjacent sites
- Improved connectivity and wayfinding to Sandbanks via Banks Road
- Improvements to public shower facilities

The Chines

*"A series of beach hut villages clustered around steeply wooded chines.
This zone is a firm favourite for families to escape the hustle and bustle"*

The stretch of coastline between Canford Cliffs and Durley Chine is characterised by its distinctive wooded chines spilling out onto the promenade. The Chines offer quiet and seclusion and approaching views of the coast; with connection to residential and urban areas within a backdrop of internationally important habitats (SSSI and SNCI). Durley, Alum and Branksome offer centres of leisure activity with Canford, Flaghead, Branksome Dene and Middle Chine featuring a more laid-back approach. Hugely popular for beach huts, the Chines offer a relaxed, family focused vibe.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Continued management of habitats and areas of biodiversity. Celebrating this landscape through improvements to interpretation and wayfinding

- Establishing and managing new sand dune habitats around intersections of the sea wall and groynes to support biodiversity and beach retention
- Improved safety by introducing street lighting but not at the expense of increased light pollution which detrimentally affects migrating birds and bats.
- Upgrade and improve public toilet provision including accessible facilities
- New leisure offer to improve the range and quality on offer at Canford Cliffs Pavilion site,
- Improvement to public realm along the promenade, particularly around the base of the Chine and cliff access points where facilities are clustered, introducing additional public facilities such as seating, cycle hoops, showers, planters, and public art where appropriate
- Improve access to and connections across the promenade
- Co-ordinated investment programme in beach huts including 'super huts' with additional units and improved visual presentation
- Support proposals for reinvestment in the Alum Chine cloister site
- Cliff top wayfinding trails including proposal for a tree top connecting cycle route across Durley & Middle Chine
- Improve vehicle drop off points and accessible parking
- Development and renewal of more low-key natural play facilities within Chine areas and the beach

Central Beaches

"The vibrant and commercial zone at the heart of the seafront. Opportunity to curate the very best in hospitality, culture and eventing the town has to offer, developing the most accessible beach to retain Bournemouth as a leading UK holiday destination of choice"

The emphasis here is on developing a coherent and consistent linear promenade space to create the ultimate vibrant beachfront visitor experience stretching between the West Cliff and Boscombe Pier.

Bournemouth Pier Approach and surrounding leisure sites such as the BIC, Waterfront (current adventure golf site), Bath Road north and south car parks, the Pavilion and Happyland offer significant potential to reinvest in a more coherent year-round leisure offer.

Existing and new development along the promenade will form an active 'street' frontage and elements along the space will have a regular, ordered appearance and layout.

Undercliff Drive and East Cliff lift site present major opportunities to rethink these spaces, providing facilities and infrastructure fit for contemporary and future audiences. Connections through to the Lower Gardens, town centre and hotel clusters on the East and West Cliff also make this space the prime location for major events that showcase the conurbation.

The Central Beaches form a vibrant, fun and colourful place to visit - whatever the time of year.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Utilise Durley Environmental Hub to maximise environmental awareness and deliver a financially sustainable offer via educational, cultural and commercial partnerships
- Investment in utilities, public toilets and infrastructure to enable diverse and vibrant seasonal sports, leisure and food & beverage offers that sympathetically enhance the public amenity and open space, with a particular focus between West Cliff and Boscombe Pier.
- Improved access to public spaces along the promenade, particularly around key entry points where facilities are clustered, such as seating, cycle hoops, showers, planters, public art, improved bin presentation and wayfinding
- More prominent entrance building at the top of cliff lift to act as a beacon and aid wayfinding
- Bournemouth Lifeguards re-development of the facilities at the base of West Cliff zig-zag/Joseph Steps into a lifeguard and community sports hub
- Re-investment in Happyland site with commercial, retail and leisure uses including possible hotel accommodation
- Support investment to extend the life of Bournemouth Pier

- Improve links to wider future leisure regeneration of sites adjacent to Pier Approach and Bath Road i.e. the BIC, Court Royal, Waterfront, Bath Road North & South car parks and the Pavilion
- Deliver stabilisation of the East Cliff lift site and seek external investment to reintroduce a cliff lift and supporting leisure to create a new destination offer at promenade level
- Upgrade to East Cliff promenade to establish a coherent Overcliff promenade link between Russell-Cotes and East Cliff lift
- Support development of the commercial leisure offer along the promenade and underutilised beach hut sites between Bournemouth and Boscombe Piers.
- Development of a seasonal cultural/retail offer within the cloister arches below Harry Ramsden's
- New two-storey development opportunities for the former Bournemouth Beach Office with commercial, retail, cultural and leisure use
- Review future of Undercliff Drive car park with a view to retain and enhance disabled accessible parking
- Improved access point to Toft zig-zag with material change at carriageway crossing including development of a beach fitness park facility
- Enable Toft Box Park to provide new start-up opportunities for innovative wellness, sports and cultural businesses
- Invest in the Prom Cafe at Boscombe to refresh the offer and maximise income
- Additional accessible beach huts and exemplar access facilities towards the water line for people with limited mobility
- Development of beach sport facilities and improved disabled access to the shoreline
- Review options to develop a cliff top café around Jon Egging Memorial, public realm and toilet block to west of East Cliff Lift
- Develop options to improve the quality and range of the leisure and cultural offer at Boscombe Pier, supporting reinvestment in the long-term maintenance of the pier structure
- The continued management and protection of the SNCI designations either side of the pier and investment in conservation management to achieve SNCI status on adjacent areas
- A well-resourced campaign to reduce litter / recycling (take your litter home) as part of a cultural and behavioural change locally and nationally

Coastal Nature Park

"A popular zone for locals, ramblers, dog walkers and beach hut families where everyone can find their space, explore and learn about our natural heritage"

The promenade running east of Boscombe Pier features a high concentration of beach huts and is hugely popular with families and locals. It is characterised by three connected landscapes of cliff-top heath, cliff face geology and beach. There are four main visitor hub areas along this stretch clustered around the overnight short stay Bournemouth Beach Lodges at Manor Steps; the 1930's cliff lift at Fisherman's Walk, the soon to be regenerated Bistro on the Beach facility at Southbourne and the Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre.

Much of the cliff-top forms a Local Nature Reserve with extensive internationally important SSSI and Scheduled Ancient Monument at Hengistbury Head. A key move could see the development of branding, interpretation, trails and educational initiatives to create a new identity around a Coastal Nature Reserve Park incorporating the cliff tops to Hengistbury Head and potentially linking to Christchurch Harbour and cliff top to Highcliffe. The Coastal Nature Reserve Park could also extend along the cliff top further to Bournemouth and the Chines beyond.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Further investment and habitat enhancement and volunteering activities based upon a coherent and environmental management plan which recognises the international importance of much of this coastal strip.

- A coherent approach to wardening of this Nature Park beyond the promenaded section with an overarching campaign to establish a cultural and behavioural change towards the natural environment and in particular litter and barbeques.
- Development of branding, education, wayfinding and interpretation for Coastal Nature Reserve Park
- Explore potential to establish new sand dune habitats around intersections of the sea wall and groynes to support bio-diversity and beach retention
- Improvements to footpaths, trails and cliff top shelters
- Co-ordinated programme of investment in beach huts, including 'super huts'
- Improvements and upgrades to public toilets
- Low key opportunities to upgrade kiosk at Portman Ravine together with toilet block, incorporating community facilities for environmental learning, sea swimming and other wellness activities
- Improve links to Fisherman's Walk Gardens with new road crossing
- New building at bottom of cliff lift incorporating educational and cultural uses and toilets together with commercial pop-up on the beach. Potential activities might include artist studio or changing / wellness / community space / beach sauna / beach goods shop
- Bistro on the Beach site regeneration introducing a new year-round eco-destination offer incorporating restaurant, kiosk, toilets and overnight rental Beach Lodges
- Seasonal café at Solent Meads car park to support conservation projects and activities.

Mudford Sandbank

*"A unique and seasonal community with an island feel and an air of self-sufficiency.
A popular destination for day visitors and nature rambles"*

The sand dunes here are protected as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and as such there is a presumption against further development in planning terms.

Popular with families, the Sandbank has an atmosphere all of its own. Activities include boating and simple outdoor recreation. The site accommodates large numbers of day visitors during the height of the season. Facilities include the café-restaurant, a small shop, and public toilets and shower facilities.

Access is by public ferries (during the season), land-train, by bike, but mostly on foot. There is no motorised vehicle access for the general public, which adds to the feeling of seclusion from the pressures of modern life.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Continue to manage the sandbank in a sustainable fashion, maintaining its current character and protecting the sensitive natural environment
- Update and refresh the current beach leisure management plan including a review of beach hut licenses
- Sustainable development of beach huts
- Re-investment in public toilet and shower facilities
- Re-investment in the jetty and public passenger boat services
- Securing a future for the Beach House Cafe site
- Refurbishment of the Blackhouse to improve the quality of the leisure accommodation offer
- A coherent plan for the zoning (fencing) of quiet areas for wildlife and ground nesting shoreline birds
- New and upgraded interpretation panels at the key access points

Christchurch Harbour

"A quiet space for nature to breathe and flourish and a sensitive environment for a range of activities from bird watching, education, walking and gentle water activities"

One of the most ecologically sensitive areas of our coastline, Christchurch Harbour from the confluence of the rivers Avon and Stour through to the 'Run' at Mudeford Quay has a well-developed leisure boating and water sports offer.

The surrounding headland of Hengistbury Head, Stanpit Marsh, Wick Meads and Priory Marsh offer extensive habitat for breeding, migrant and wintering wetland birds and are popular with schools and birdwatchers. The emphasis is on protecting these environments and avoiding over development of leisure activities on land and in the water. The harbour and headland form a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also incorporates the Avon Valley Ramsar Site, Dorset Heaths and River Avon SAC, Christchurch Harbour SPA and Stanpit Marsh Local Nature Reserve. Hengistbury Head is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument with human occupation stretching back some 12,000 years.

Hengistbury Head and its Visitor Centre offer an outstanding and internationally important heritage and cultural experience, attracting one million visitors annually. The Hengistbury Head Outdoor Education Centre has long provided community access to water sports and environmental learning. There is a need for a coherent plan to secure its future alongside the other onsite offers.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Improving connectivity and wayfinding around the harbour sites for walkers and cyclists
- Support investment in habitat improvements, biodiversity and environmental education
- Securing the long-term future for the Hengistbury Head Outdoor Education Centre, improving connections to the wider harbour water sports offer
- Continued close working with volunteers who manage and help maintain sites
- Protect historic landfill areas within Stanpit Marsh from erosion
- The established Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre as the key intellectual and physical 'gateway' to the Coastal Nature Reserve Park
- New and upgraded interpretation panels at all the key access points to Hengistbury Head
- The zoning of quiet areas both on land and on water

Mudeford Quay & Gundimore Prom

"The maritime heritage zone"

The Quay is the historic centre of the local fishing industry in Christchurch with its listed buildings on the Quay head, and scenic lobster pots. The ferry to Mudeford Sandbank operates from here and crabbing from the sea wall is a popular pastime for families. Highcliffe Sailing Club, the dinghy park, and the RNLI boathouse all add to the nautical feel. Much of the site is taken up with car parking; a public house, café, and public toilets mean that this site is a popular tourist destination. Part of the area is protected as an SNCI alongside a large area of open greenspace and a children's play area provide opportunities for public events and informal leisure.

Gundimore Promenade connects Mudeford Quay to Avon Beach and provides easy access to the coast for the less able with its long, straight, well surfaced path as well as opportunities for dinghy launching directly into the sea to avoid having to negotiate the fast flowing 'Run'.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Investment in public toilets

- Improved connectivity for cyclists and walkers
- Support investment in water sports provision
- Exploring options to introduce local heritage interpretation, exhibition and preservation of historic landscape and highlighting the sensitive nature of the harbour and mudflats particularly to water sport users
- Sensitive improvements to safety and lighting of the Quay, but not at the expense of additional light pollution and seafront promenade together with additional public seating/cycle racks

Avon & Friars Cliff Beaches

"Vibrant family beaches at the heart of Christchurch Bay, a zone for traditional seaside holidays at a more relaxed pace and scale"

Probably the busiest of the Christchurch area beaches, the focus at Avon Beach is the restaurant, shop, and associated facilities. The wide beach is ideal for swimming and the privately leased beach huts give a family feel. The car park provides direct level access to the coast.

The beach and promenade at Friars Cliff are backed by a large number of day huts which are privately owned and well used which helps give this area of the coast a village community feel. The café/restaurant and public toilets are popular with visitors. The Christchurch Lifesaving Club operates successfully from the clubhouse and beach, and the Christchurch Boardsailing Club is based near the car park.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Enhancing cycle route connectivity across cliff top to Highcliffe where practical
- Review future management of the leisure operation at Avon Beach
- Investment to improve facility and cleanliness standards in public toilets
- Improve parking arrangements
- Enable investment in beach huts
- Enable more events and community activities at Friars Cliff common open space
- Develop interpretation on former Radome radar site

Highcliffe Beaches

"A rural coastal zone to escape urban living and connect with unspoilt beaches and water sport activities away from the crowds"

The beach at Highcliffe Castle has a more natural and secluded feel as a result of naturally restricted access and a lack of infrastructure. The cliff features provide a setting which is quite different from that of the other beaches and also offers the opportunity for interpretation of the unique geology which makes this area a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Access to the cliff-top nature reserve at Steamer Point Woodland, the Grade I listed castle, café/restaurant and public toilets is via steep steps from the beach or via a gentle slope on the recently re-built Highcliffe Castle zig-zag path.

Further east along the coast is Highcliffe Beach which is also more natural in feel than other parts of the coast and the cliffs form part of the SSSI. This section of the coast has access via sloping stone paths and a large car park and public toilets are immediately adjacent. A café/restaurant on the cliff-top provides extensive views over the bay to the Isle of Wight. At beach level there are sufficient natural waves to provide good conditions for surfing, body boarding and swimming.

The Seafront Strategy supports:

- Investment in habitat management, linked wildlife corridors through Steamer Point to Chewton Bunny and interpretation for the Highcliffe undercliff
- Improving access to the beach from Highcliffe Car Park

- Explore options to improve the self-catering holiday facilities at Steam Point
- Explore options to improve accessibility along the beach between Highcliffe Castle zig zag and Friars Cliff
- Maintaining the un-developed nature of this area
- Improving the provision of public toilet and shower facilities adjacent to Highcliffe top car park
- The investigation of a dog free zone and 'Coastal Park Run' route

Further Information

Should you have any further comments or queries, please feel free to contact us via email at:

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