

**HOYLAKE BEACH MANAGEMENT  
COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY****BACKGROUND**

The assent for the current beach management operations at Hoylake Beach, comprising the removal of wind blown sand that builds up against the sea wall and blocks outfalls, expires at the end of March 2021. Spraying of the beach with herbicide and mechanical raking of the beach between the Lifeboat station and Red Rocks, to manage the growth of *spartina angelica*, which had previously received assent from Natural England for a period of 5 years from April 2016, has already ceased as a result of the Executive Member Decision of March 2020.

Advice has been received from Natural England ahead of the development of a new beach management plan which indicates the likely permissible operations for beach management whilst also accepting the wishes for both a more natural approach to management and also for the retention and future use of an amenity beach. Natural England also advised on the development of a baseline study of the existing ecology present at the beach combined with an assessment of how the beach has changed using existing monitoring data and also how it is likely to evolve taking into account the likely ecological changes and those associated with climate change. Understanding the likely beach response will allow various management options to be tested to determine their impact on the natural environment, land drainage and on flood risk as that increases with sea level rise.

Wirral's Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee approved the development of a Communications and Engagement Strategy (CES) for Hoylake Beach Management at its December 2020 meeting. The final recommendation requires the Strategy to be developed with a Working Group established with cross party representation from Committee Members

Any stakeholder engagement process is intended to build trust and understanding between all parties involved with the aim of being inclusive, transparent and appropriate in its methods and application.

**ESTABLISH ENGAGEMENT METHOD & GOVERNANCE**

This draft CES seeks to establish the following to enable effective engagement on the development of the Hoylake Beach Management Plan (HBMP).

- **Hoylake Beach Information** on the [haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk](https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk) website. The “haveyoursay” portal provides an ideal location to host and publicise the various stages of engagement and consultation. The portal provides a platform to host existing data and evidence relating to the project and tools, such as Ideas Board and Interactive Mapping that lend themselves

engagement and consultations on future management (see New Brighton Masterplan and Council Budget 2021-22 for examples). The portal will allow opportunities, constraints, timescales and deliverables to be clearly set out.

- **Steering Group.** The future management of Hoylake Beach cuts across and impacts on many different Council services:
  - Parks & Countryside (Christine Smyth)
  - Flood & Coastal Risk Management (Neil Thomas)
  - Highways (Brian Smith)
  - Waste & Recycling (Mike Cockburn)
  - Tourism & Communities (TBC)
  - Communications & Marketing (TBC)
  - Neighbourhoods & Engagement (Fergus Adams)

Establishment of a Steering Group with officer representation, identified above, will ensure all service objectives and impacts are fully considered during the development of the HBMP. The Steering Group will work with the Political Working Group and inform statutory bodies of progress.

- **Political Working Group.** The December 2020 Environment, Climate Emergency and Transportation Committee recommended a cross party working group review the CES prior to the approval by the next Committee. It is proposed that this group is established to review all consultation methods, materials, and consultation outputs prior to formal approval by the Committee.

## **STAGE 1 – DEFINE CONSTRAINTS AND EVIDENCE BASE**

### **CONSTRAINTS**

Any future HBMP will need to be subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). In order for the HBMP to receive assent from Natural England the management activities considered in the HRA need to align with the Natural England's objectives for North Wirral Foreshore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Wirral Council has used Natural England's Discretionary Advisory Service (DAS) to identify the constraints within which any future beach management at Hoylake must be implemented.

The DAS provides a steer for future beach management. The DAS should be set out as the framework within which the Council is looking to develop a HBMP at all stages of consultation.

**Objective:** Inform and educate to build a wider understanding of the regulations that apply.

**Timescale:** DAS complete

### **EVIDENCE BASE**

Procure an Ecology and Geomorphology Study (EGS) for Hoylake Beach. The EGS will include an ecological survey of Hoylake Beach which will identify and map what species are growing where. The EGS will also use existing data to look at how Hoylake Beach has changed, how that change

is impacted by the ecology at Hoylake Beach and continuing natural coastal processes and also how Hoylake Beach will change when considering future climate change scenarios. The outputs of the EGS will be used to identify whether management options are sustainable.

**Objective:** Improve understanding of the current and likely future evolution of Hoylake Beach

**Timescale:** To be procured April 2021 once the Procurement Brief & Specification has Committee Approval.

## **STAGE 2 – ESTABLISH PROJECT SITE AND PUBLICISE ENGAGEMENT**

### **PROJECT SITE**

Establish the Hoylake Beach Management Project site on HaveYourSay.

Populate the site with the data and evidence collected to date. Identify reasons for undertaking public engagement on beach management, identify how the future HBMP must work (from Natural England's DAS) and publicise the survey and EGS, the outputs of which will be used to inform the future HBMP. The Project Site will also provide information on:

- Overall timeframe for the Project
- The objectives of each stage of engagement and consultation
- What will be delivered

**Objective:** To provide the basis for obtaining different views on future management requirements and arrangements.

**Timescale:** To be established in April 2021 once the Communication & Engagement Strategy has Committee Approval.

### **PUBLICISE ENGAGEMENT**

Use Communications & Marketing to promote the Project Site.

Contact those bodies with a statutory responsibility eg Natural England, Environment Agency to make sure they are aware of the project.

Project Site to allow comments to be submitted at this stage. Comments would not be publicly visible.

**Objectives:** To promote the Project Site, raise awareness of the coastal processes causing change and the legal constraints future beach management must operate within. Ensure the development of the HBMP is an inclusive and transparent process and that the public are kept informed of progress.

**Timescale:** April 2021 once the Communication & Engagement Strategy has Committee Approval and Project Site established.

## **STAGE 3 – PUBLISH ECOLOGY & GEOMORPHOLOGY STUDY**

### **PROJECT SITE**

Following review by the Steering Group publish a non-technical summary and more detailed technical report of the EGS on the Project Site.

**Objective:** To publish the evidence base that will be used to inform development of the HBMP

**Timescale:** November 2021

#### **STAGE 4 – INITIAL CONSULTATION**

##### **CONSULTATION - SEEKING YOUR VIEWS ON HOYLAKE BEACH MANAGEMENT**

Identifying the framework set by the DAS, existing data and the findings of the EGS and using the tools available on the Project site, and promoted through Communications & Marketing, the first phase of consultation will seek a wide range of views from key stakeholders and the wider public, on the future management of Hoylake Beach. By setting within the regulatory and evidential framework there is an opportunity to manage expectations of consultees by clearly setting out how the ideas and options identified will be taken forward.

**Objective:** To gather all views on the future of Hoylake Beach and inform development of a series of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) objectives for future management.

**Timescale:** December 2021 – February 2022.

**Output:** Long list of potential management options, screened against the DAS and appraised against the findings of the EGS and definition of Objectives for Future Management

**Approval:** Pre-consultation approval required on consultation methods, questions and supporting information.

#### **STAGE 5 – OBJECTIVES FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT**

##### **OBJECTIVES**

Based on the outputs of the initial consultation a series of objectives for the future management of Hoylake Beach can be established. The Objectives for Future Management can be published on the Project Site so that the transparent process continues and consultees can see how their views are being used to shape the future management options. The future management options can be tested against the objectives prior to further consultation.

**Objective:** maintain transparent process and demonstrate how views are considered and taken forward.

**Timescale:** March 2022

**Output:** Objectives for the future management of Hoylake Beach

**Approval:** Political approval required to agree objectives, both through the Political Working Group and Committee.

#### **STAGE 6 – DEVELOP SHORT LIST OF MANAGEMENT OPTIONS**

**SHORT LIST**

Following review of all screened in options and ideas from the first phase of consultation into a long list, a short list of management options will be developed to identify options that are sustainable when screened against the findings of the EGS and the objectives for future management of the beach at Hoylake.

The Short List of options will be subject to further consultation to identify a preferred management option. Ideally no more than 4 management options to be identified so that the consultation is clear and unambiguous.

**Timescale:** June 2022

**Output:** Short List of Options for further public consultation

**Approval:** Committee approval to consult on the Short List of Options required

**STAGE 7 – CONSULT ON SHORT LISTED OPTIONS FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT  
CONSULTATION**

Using the Project Site and tools and promoted by Communications & Marketing consult on the options for the future management of Hoylake Beach.

**Objective:** to identify a preferred approach for the future management of Hoylake Beach

**Timescale:** July 2022 – September 2022

**How:** Using project website and possibly through live online Q&A sessions

**Output:** Preferred option for Hoylake Beach Management Plan, recognising that this may be a hybrid of all options put forward.

**STAGE 8 – APPROVAL OF HOYLAKE BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN  
COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

Using the evidence of the initial and subsequent consultation, the scientific evidence bases of the EGS and the constraints as set out in Natural England's DAS, present the proposals for the future HBMP to Environment, Climate Emergency and Transportation Committee.

Once approved publish the HBMP on the Project Site

**Timescale:** October 2022-December 2022

**Output:** Approval of the draft HBMP and approval to develop an HRA for submission to Natural England in order to gain assent for implementation of the HBMP.

**STAGE 9 – HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT & NATURAL ENGLAND ASSENT  
HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT**

Undertake an HRA against the methods of implementing the management of Hoylake Beach as set out in the HBMP. Upon completion and following approval by Working Group and/ or Committee submit to Natural England.

**NATURAL ENGLAND**

NE review the HRA for HBMP and issue assent notice.

**Timescale:** January 2023 – March 2023

**Output:** HRA for submission

**STAGE 10 – DELIVER HOYLAKE BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Manage Hoylake Beach in accordance with the HBMP and any conditions imposed by Natural England

Update Project Site with HBMP.

**Timescale:** April 2023 onwards