

WEYMOUTH SEAFRONT STRATEGY

2024 - 2034



"Mainly Pavilion end, playing with grandchildren, taking exercise, taking refreshment" "The kids like the arcades and the fair which cost a bomb. We go on the beach usually by the View so we are nearer the toilets but since volleyball nets installed we have been going near them as my teen enjoys playing. We also go to Greenhill for paddleboarding or if the beach is very busy. We like walking back along the promenade. We enjoy a drink at the boat all year round."

"Greenhill beach in the summer, as there are less tourists there"

"Days on the beach at the pavilion end, walks along the seafront as far as the sea life centre.
Entertaining the kids at amusements"

"Walk the dogs in the south, then as it gets warmer closer to north for sunbathing as less people go here" "Ice cream from a kiosk, we scoot or cycle along to Overcombe Corner and usually get a coffee at Greenhill. We have 2 small children and will use the small paddling pool if it's open"

"Greenhill beach (the stone covered area) I usually chill and then go in the sea" "Paddle along the shoreline between the King's Statue and Greenhill Gardens. Buy a ice cream and sit on stone bench by clock tower overlooking the sea. Enjoy sea views and gardens at Greenhill. Chat to locals and visitors." "I enjoy the Greenhill area because it is beautiful and less chaotic"

"All areas of seafront love walking,

"Pavilion side so walk along the beach and grab a drink"

meeting friends, enjoying the view of the sea and beach"

"Usually Greenhill area to play on the beach and go in the sea, although I do use the whole seafront at different times. They all have their own charms!

"Overcome beach, sit with friends and swimming in the sea"

"I cycle along the prom from Preston into town. I also walk a lot from Overcombe to the Front skate park" "I run the entire promenade regularly, fish from piers, build sandcastles with my family and swim the full length, I also commute by bike on the promenade" "Pavilion theatre to watch shows, the beach to open water swim, the beach for Weymouth surf lifesaving club, Alexandra Gardens for sitting in, coffee from a hut on the beach, cycling along the prom, Greenhill gardens for coffee and relaxing, ice cream, Overcombe corner for swimming"

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FOREWORD

When people think of Weymouth, one iconic image that immediately springs to mind is the stretch of golden sand we all know and love as Weymouth Beach.

Residents, visitors, and even royalty have been coming to the town beach to bathe in the shallow waters for hundreds of years.

It's a jewel in the Jurassic Coast which has picked up a plethora of accolades, including being voted best UK beach by Sunday Times readers in 2023.

"Weymouth has everything you need. It has lifeguards; crystal-clear waters; a wide, sandy beach; shallow waters that are safe for the kids; toilets, showers, free drinking water; deckchairs and sun loungers; donkeys, beach volleyball courts, a dog area, and a place where you can borrow buckets and spades.

"The Council also runs special events including fireworks, funfairs and sports festivals. It's an amazing place."

Town Clerk Jane Biscombe, quoted in The Times



So how do we build on this success, ensuring the seafront evolves to be a year-round destination for everyone to enjoy?

The Seafront Strategy has been drawn up to provide this vision over the next 10 years. It establishes a clear sense of direction and provides a focus for budget and resource allocation. It seeks to maximise support and advocate the benefits of the seafront to internal and external stakeholders and encourage partnership working. It is also mindful of the financial challenges the Council will face in delivering the aspirations it has set out to achieve over the next decade.







It covers the area from the Promenade walkway along the seafront near the Pavilion end of the beach in the south, along to Greenhill and Overcombe in the north. The strategy focuses on key areas of work the Town Council can deliver to enhance one of Weymouth's key assets, including:

- Consolidating the beach attractions
- **■** Enhancing the Promenade
- Catering facilities along the Promenade
- Enhancing Greenhill and Preston Beach
- Facilities and activities for young people
- **■** Generic Actions

This strategic document could not have been shaped without the input from a range of residents from different communities and age groups, visitors, councillors, and businesses. I would like to thank everyone for taking their time to give their feedback during earlier rounds of consultation. I'm excited to see the vision for our treasured seafront unfold, and for the many people who live, work, and visit Weymouth who will continue to enjoy it and create lasting memories for many years to come.

Councillor Kate Wheller,

Mayor of Weymouth 2023 / 2024

INTRODUCTION

Weymouth beach and promenade are the jewel in Weymouth's crown. It is award winning with not only have Flag award status, but it also holds a Seaside Award and in 2023 was named The Times Beach of the Year. But surveys suggest that for holiday makers, a great beach is no longer enough. They are looking for places with 'authenticity', places which demonstrate their heritage, nature, culture, and wider sustainability.

Weymouth has a population of 53,000 residents, with 1.6 million staying visitors and 2.1 million day visits each year, adding £2.9m to the local economy.

This strategy considers ways in which Weymouth seafront can make the best possible use of its assets, to attract visitors, support local businesses and provide the best possible social and leisure facilities for local residents.

The strategy has been informed by a consultation and draft strategy convened by an external consultant; which were then followed by further consultation undertaken by the Town Council.

The strategy specifically focuses on the Seafront, and actions that are achievable and which are also within the control of the Town Council.



This document sets out opportunities for Weymouth Seafront. It builds on the priorities, ideas and suggestions that were identified through the various consultations that have taken place.

PURPOSE OF OUR SEAFRONT STRATEGY

- To improve the experience of residents and visitors receive when they visit Weymouth Seafront.
- Secure additional investment and funding to develop the seafront landscape and infrastructure for recreation, relaxation, leisure and tourism and to provide opportunities for physical activity for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- To work to become greener, cleaner and sustainable in our activities as well as supporting our Communities and partners to be as Green as Possible.
- To conserve and enhance Weymouth seafronts' identity and heritage assets.



The Seafront Strategy will provide a strategic framework for the development and management of Weymouth Seafront for the next 10 years. It will:

- Establish a clear sense of direction and provide a focus for budget and resource allocation
- Maximise support and advocate the benefits of the Seafront to internal and external stakeholders
- Encourage stakeholder involvement and partnership working

The Council recognises that a clear vision is needed to deliver a range of benefits for both residents and visitors to the town. These benefits include:

- Setting out the councils strategic direction for developing and managing the seafront
- Providing a sense of direction to all stakeholders so that they understand their role and are able to effectively work in partnership with the council
- Enhancing the wellbeing of residents and visitors
- Making Weymouth a better place to live and visit
- Protecting and enhancing the town's cultural and natural heritage
- Understand the role and importance of the seafront in the wider community.

THE SEAFRONT STRATEGY JOURNEY

- **1. Spring 2022** Consultants were appointed with an initial engagement session taking place with members and officers. This included a walkabout on the seafront.
- **2. Summer 2022** Residents, visitors and businesses were asked to contribute their responses in a survey. We received over 2,200 responses
- **3. Autumn 2022** The initial findings were presented to stakeholders, including an online webinar.
- **4. Winter 2022/Spring 2023** A draft Seafront Strategy was produced by the consultants, and members asked officers to define the emerging ideas that the Council are able to deliver themselves
- **5. Summer 2023** The council led a consultation on the draft Seafront Strategy, and 1,100 responses were received
- 6. Winter 2024 3/24 Final Seafront Strategy drafted and adopted

Throughout the journey of the Seafront Strategy representatives of the community with specific interests in the seafront have been consulted with, including members of the public of all ages, councillors, council tenants, visitors and local businesses.

STRATEGY LIFE CYCLE

All strategy documents are living entities, changing as each month passes by.

It is important that the strategy document is reviewed and updated bi-annually by the Council.

Prepare & adopt Weymouth Seafront Strategy

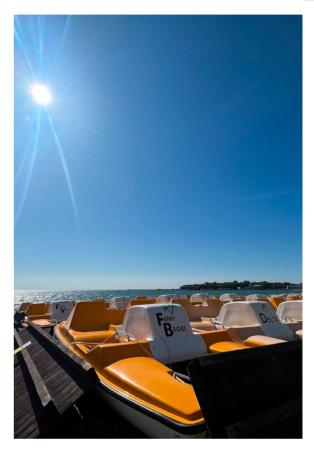


ACTIVITY AND POPULARITY

As you head from Overcombe to the Pavilion the seafront becomes more popular. There are many reasons for this including:

- Sand. The beach is wider at its southern end, and there is more sand and less shingle which makes it more popular.
- Parking. The southern area of the seafront is located between the two 'main' car parks, The Swannery and The Pavilion. It is also adjacent to the bus station and closest to the rail station.
- Leisure Activities. There is a concentration of leisure opportunities, including pedalo hire, donkey rides, beach volleyball and funfair rides in this area.
- Food & Drink. The southern area is close to the Harbour and Town Centre, as well as having a concentration of cafés and restaurants on the beach itself.





Whilst crowded beaches are obviously a sign of popularity and 'success', there are indications that pictures of crowded beaches deter tourists. Given that for the majority of the summer only a certain section of the beach becomes crowded, a key challenge for Weymouth seafront is to spread this popularity further north so that it can accommodate more visitors and attract more expenditure to support local businesses.



CHARACTER AREAS

Weymouth has over 2 miles of beachfront which vary considerably in character. Walk along the Promenade from Overcombe to the Pavilion, you can experience the seafront

becoming gradually more 'urban'.

Preston Beach

It starts at the 'wild' and natural beach adjacent to the Lodmoor RSPB reserve with long views in all directions, north to Bowleaze Cove, east over the bay, west over the nature reserve and south towards Portland. This area of beach is primarily a sea defence

Greenhill Beach

At Greenhill Beach the promenade becomes more enclosed, with buildings of a residential scale and character, green front gardens, beach huts and Greenhill Gardens itself giving it a more 'local' quality. Adjacent to the promenade is the formal Green Flag award winning Greenhill Gardens, as well as the historic and architecturally significant beach chalets.

Town Beach

From Brunswick Terrace the buildings along the promenade become grander in scale, and are set further back from the seafront. The cafés and buildings on the promenade itself also become larger. The promenade is still pedestrianised but the traffic along the Esplanade becomes more intrusive. South of the Jubilee Clock the seafront has a much stronger 'town centre' quality, with shops, cafés and leisure uses at ground floor of the buildings along the Esplanade and more commercial activity on the beach itself. This activity reaches a peak in the seafront attraction area opposite New Bond Street, aswell as bars/restaurants towards Alexandra Gardens and the Pavilion Theatre, which are the busiest and most crowded areas of the seafront.





HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

- Use the annual residents survey to monitor residents satisfaction with the seafront
- Regular monitoring of the progress of this strategy against the action plan
- Retain and secure Blue Flag and Seaside Award status
- Monitoring of feedback received through informal means e.g. social media, customer discussions etc
- Increase in seafront income generation
- Increase in the number of events and activities taking place on Weymouth Seafront

EMERGING THEMES:

Following the first consultation in the summer of 2022 that received over 2,200 responses some key themes emerged which were then further consulted on as they were considered important for the emerging seafront strategy. These themes were:

- Beach attractions
- Enhancing the Promenade
- Catering facilities along the Promenade
- Placement of Catering Facilities
- Pedestrian Access
- Enhancing Greenhill & Preston Beach





DELIVERING THE VISION

The initial public consultations indicated what residents and visitors felt Weymouth Seafront needs to do to make it a better place to visit and spend time on.

Priorities included:

- 45% more greenery and landscaped spaces that promote biodiversity
- 44% Better public spaces to hold events and festivals
- 43% Landscaping and infrastructure to promote physical activity and wellbeing
- 38% more public seating, benches and shelter
- 37% Better routes for cyclists along the seafront
- 37% More child friendly spaces (play areas, splash parks etc)
- 31% A wider range of places to eat and drink
- 30% Better facilities for watersports
- 28% More spaces for young people to hang out
- 18% More cycle parking
- 9% Improved wayfinding

These priorities can be broken down by user type

25s Priorities

- **1.** Better public spaces to hold events and festivals
- **2.** More spaces for young people to hang out
- **3.** More greenery and landscaped spaces that promote biodiversity
- 4. More public seating, benches and shelter
- **5.** Better facilities for watersports

Priorities for those visiting with families

- **1.** More child friendly spaces (play areas, splash parks etc)
- **2.** Better public spaces to hold events and festivals
- **3.** More greenery and landscaped places that promote biodiversity
- **4.** Landscaping and infrastructure to promote physical activity and wellbeing
- 5. More public seating, benches and shelter

Local Priorities

- **1.** Better public spaces to hold events and festivals
- **2.** More greenery and landscaped spaces that promote biodiversity
- **3.** Landscaping and infrastructure to promote physical activity and wellbeing
- **4.** More child friendly spaces (play areas, splash parks etc)
- **5.** Better routes for cyclists along the seafront

Visitor (non Weymouth resident priorities)

- **1.** More public seating, benches and shelter
- **2.** More greenery and landscaped spaces that promote biodiversity
- **3.** More child friendly spaces (play areas, splash parks etc)
- **4.** Landscaping and infrastructure to promote physical activity and wellbeing
- **5.** Better public spaces to hold events and festivals





Focus Areas: Beach Attractions

The draft Masterplan recommended that certain elements of the funfair should be removed from the beach area. Focusing the funfair on the 'vintage' elements, such as the helter-skelter, to create a stronger 'heritage' brand for the funfair. It was felt that this would have the added benefit of creating more space on the sandy beach which is the most popular area for visitors.

Having beach attractions on Weymouth beach do not only provide entertainment for visitors and residents, but also act as a source of income generation for the Council.

Actions

- To retain high quality attraction sites on Weymouth beach
- To seek to consolidate the current four attraction sites into one larger site. Predominantly focusing the attractions on vintage elements, but to include a proportion of modern.

Priorities

- To balance the desire and expectations of having beach attractions, whilst ensuring that the beach is not cluttered
- To provide attraction sites that host vintage attractions, as well as those with a modern feel to create a fun and exciting experience for users
- To continue to ensure that larger travelling fairground style rides are not located on the beach
- To develop an offering that appeals to users of all ages, and not just younger children
- To ensure that the attractions continue to deliver a positive experience to residents and visitors and thus contributing to the towns tourist revenue

Enhancing the Promenade

The draft Masterplan recommended improving the area of the Promenade by the Jubilee Clock to make it more attractive and better suited for small events and pop-up concessions.

The Jubilee Clock is situated on the Promenade opposite King Street which is one of the key arrival points to the seafront; it is also one of Weymouth's most iconic structures. The Jubilee Clock creates a strong visual landmark, and benefits from a wide public space/promenade around the clock tower.



Priorities

- To enhance the area around the clock tower using both internal and external investment to improve the public space
- To ensure that any developments consider the needs of all stakeholders and balances functionality
- To ensure that any enhancements to within the area of the Jubilee clock do not impact on the historic identity of the area

Actions

- Develop an events programme for bandstand music in this area so there is some form of entertainment every night on the seafront during peak season e.g. Monday fireworks, Tuesday live music on a café decking etc
- Develop a programme of pop up themed market events to appeal to a wide variety of users e.g. food, crafts, farmers etc
- Introduce a street entertainers spot on the promenade which can host a variety of acts e.g. buskers, clowning, dance, living statue etc
- Increase the number of benches on the Seafront, particularly in the area of the Jubilee Clock

Catering Facilities along the Promenade

There are many different catering outlets along the length of the Promenade, including cafes and small kiosks that trade at different times of the year. The Draft Masterplan highlighted opportunities to expand and diversify the current offer and allowed respondents to detail what form of additional catering they would like to see on the Promenade and Beach.

Overwhelmingly there was an expression of support for different types of seafood on the promenade including paella, Turkish, Caribbean, Spanish Tapas, Asian, noodles, salad bar, burritos, buddha bowls, and jacket potatoes.

Priorities

- To ensure that any new or future catering facilities on the seafront offer variety and not the same or similar ranges to existing businesses
- To work with partners to encourage extended opening into the evening
- To encourage existing and future tenants to offer more healthy options including vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options
- To promote and encourage the use of local suppliers









Actions

- When future leases become available for renewal, officers should seek different offerings to what is already available from current tenants
- To explore a permanent street food offering

Enhancing Greenhill and Preston Beach

The shingle beach from Greenhill (near the Pier Bandstand) up to Overcombe is a great asset that is a popular location for sea swimmers and paddleboarding. The draft Masterplan recommended a number of potential interventions to make this area feel more comfortable to spend time in without impacting on the qualities which differentiate it from the rest of the seafront area including: natural play features; areas of natural/native planting; viewing areas to promote Lodmoor nature reserve; improved seating, lighting and shelter; facilities to support water-based activities; and a distinctive café offer.

Greenhill beach has a more vintage feel due to the beach huts and formal award winning Greenhill Gardens. It is approximately a 10 minute walk from the Pier Bandstand and also the Lodmoor attractions including the Sealife Centre.

The word cloud below details the vast variety of suggestions for improvements to the area:



Enhancing Greenhill and Preston Beach

Priorities

- To develop the area at Greenhill and Preston Beach to support water based activities
- To deliver 'well-being' by putting Greenhill and Preston Beach at the heart of outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles for all
- To develop, protect and provide a clean and safe beach and promenade environment by seeking inward and external investment prioritising neglected and underused areas
- To balance functionality and local and visitor needs for Greenhill and Preston Beach without compromising their value as a leisure and tourist amenity
- To develop landscape and infrastructure to promote physical activity and wellbeing

Actions

- To prioritise investment and revenue to this area of the resort to raise overall standards
- To work in partnership with Friends of Greenhill Gardens, Greenhill Community Interest Company and other stakeholder to provide additional facilities and make improvements to this area
- To work with partners to encourage and support outdoor sporting activities in this area
- To support and encourage the physical and mental health benefits that the activities on offer in this area provide
- Explore the development and installation of a childrens park, play equipment, splash park etc
- Introduction of free to use BBQ sites
- Develop a package of improvements to support water users, including showers, lockers and changing facilities
- Exploration of installation of outdoor gym and fitness equipment
- Exploration and development of beach hut offer, with a focus on casual and short term hire
- Exploration of installation of outdoor recreation equipment e.g. table tennis
- Development of ideas on how to utilise the promenade between Brunswick Terrace and Greenhill Gardens





Facilities and Activities for Young People

The draft masterplan highlighted that there may not be enough facilities on the seafront for children and young people.

When undertaking any developments and consultations, it is of utmost importance to consider people of all ages, and balance the needs of all stakeholders.

Priorities

To ensure that infrastructure/new development is aimed at all age groups

Actions

- Exploration of development of children's park, play equipment, splash park etc
- Installation of Special Education Needs communication boards
- Make the volleyball courts more accessible and explore the installation of football courts/designated sports arena







Focus Area: Generic Actions

In addition to there being specific actions for defined focus areas of the seafront, there are also some generic actions for the general resort as a whole.

These include:

- Exploring alternative event locations so fewer events take place in the dog area.
- The introduction of shaded areas onto the beach.
- 'Free' activities to be explored and introduced as part of the events programme.
- Exploration of a large screen on the beach for major events as part of the events programme.
- The introduction of public showers across the seafront.
- Understanding if there is a need for additional cycle racks, and installing more if necessary.
- When undertaking any work or developments improved accessibility is to be considered.
- Seek to develop a programme of gym/fitness classes.
- Look to improve wayfinding to connect the seafront with the wider town.
- Seek to improve digital technological infrastructure to improve connectivity and communications.
- Review the beach offer for users e.g. beach equipment







SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

• Near Term = 0 to 3 years • Mid Term = 3 to 7 years • Longer term = 7 to 10 years

Focus Area	WTC actions	Timescales	Financial Considerations
1. Beach attractions	1a) To retain high quality attraction sites on Weymouth beach	1a) Ongoing	1a) Income generation
	1b) To seek to consolidate the current four attraction sites into one larger site. Predominantly focusing the attractions on vintage elements, but to include a proportion of modern.	1b) By April 2025	1b) Costs Associated with planning process. Impact on income generation. Officer time.
2. Enhancing the Promenade	2a) Develop an events programme for bandstand music in this area so there is some form of entertainment every night on the seafront during peak season e.g. Monday fireworks, Tuesday live music on a café decking etc	2a) Trial Summer 2024	2a) Officer time and potential costs of performers. Income generation from sponsorship
	2b) Develop a programme of pop up themed market events to appeal to a wide variety of users e.g. food, crafts, farmers etc	2b) Near term	2b) Officer time Income generation
	2c) Introduce a street entertainers spot on the promenade which can host a variety of acts e.g. buskers, clowning, dance, living statue etc	2c) Trial Summer 2024	2c) Officer time
	2d) Increase the number of benches on the Seafront, particularly in the area of the Jubilee Clock by 20%	2d) Near term/ mid term	2d) Officer time and funded through memorialisation and/or other income e.g. CIL

3. Catering facilities along the Promenade	3a) When future leases become available for renewal, officers should seek different offerings to what is already available from current tenants 3b) To explore a permanent street food offering	3a) When leases are up for renewal 3b) Long term	3a) Funding investment from private sector operators Income generation 3b) Officer time Income Generation
4. Enhancing Greenhill and Preston Beach	4a) To prioritise investment and revenue to this area of the resort to raise overall standards 4b) To work in partnership with Friends of Greenhill Gardens, Greenhill Community Interest Company and other stakeholders to provide additional facilities and make improvements to this area. Continue to meet with stakeholders on a regular	4a) Ongoing 4b) Mid -term/ Long term	TBC following exploration TBC following exploration
	dc) To work with partners to encourage and support outdoor sporting activities in this area and the wider resort. Officers to form relationships with community groups e.g. sea swimmers and meet with them regularly.	4c) Ongoing	4c) Officer time
	4d) To support and encourage the physical and mental health benefits that the activities on offer in this area provide	4d) Ongoing	4d) Officer time (Community development to realise benefits and communications team to promote)
	 4e) Explore the development and installation of childrens park, play equipment, splash park etc 4f) Introduction of free to use BBQ sites in this area and the wider resort 	4e) Long term 4f) Summer 2024	4e) Officer timeCapital costs4f) Officer timeCapital costs

	4g) Develop a package of improvements to support water users, including	4g) Long term	4g) Officer time Capital Costs
	showers, lockers and changing facilities		Income generation
	4h) Exploration of installation of outdoor gym	4h) 2025/2026	4h) Officer time
	and fitness equipment		Capital costs
	4i) Exploration and development of beach hut	4i) Long Term	4i) Capital costs
	offer, with a focus on casual and short term hire		Income generation
	4j) Exploration of installation of outdoor	4j) 2024	4j) Capital costs
	recreation equipment e.g. table tennis		Officer time
	4k) Development of ideas on how to utilise the promenade between Brunswick Terrace and Greenhill Gardens	4k) Mid term	4k) Officer time
	4l) Continue to meet and have discussions with Greenhill Community Interest Company.	4l) Long term	4l) External investment and/or capital costs
5. Facilities and activities for young	5a) Exploration of development of childrens,	5a) Long term	5a) Officer time
people	park, play equipment, splash park etc		Capital Costs
	5b) Installation of Special Education Needs communication boards	5b) Near term	5b) Capital costs
	5c) Make the volleyball courts more accessible and	5c) Mid Term	5c) Officer time
	explore the installation of football courts/designated sports arena		Capital Costs
6. Generic Actions	6a) Fewer events in dog area	6a) To be considered as business as usual	Officer time
	6b) More shaded areas on the beach	6b) Mid term	Capital Costs
	6c) Desire for 'free' activities	6c) Ongoing consideration for the resorts events programme	Officer time
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	6d) Screen on the beach for major events	6d) Ongoing consideration for the resorts events programme	Officer time
	6e) More showers	6e) Mid term	6e) Capital costs
	oc) word showers	oc) who term	de) capital costs
	6f) More cycle racks	6f) Near term	6f) Capital costs
	6g) Improved accessibility	6g) Ongoing - Consideration should be made at improving accessibility each time a development or improvement is undertaken	6g) Officer time Capital costs
	6h) Programme of gym classes	6h) Near term	6h) Officer time Income generation
	6i) Improved	6i) Mid term	6i) Officer time
	wayfinding in this area and the wider resort		Capital Costs
	6j) Seek to improve		
	digital infrastructure 6k) Review the beach	6j) Long term	6j) Capital costs Officer time Income generation
	offer for users e.g. beach equipment	6k) 2024/2025	6k) Decrease or increase in income dependant on outcome of the review



WEYMOUTH SEAFRONT STRATEGY **2024 – 2034**

Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

