

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	9 JUNE 2020	5
FYLDE'S COASTAL STRATEGY – UPDATE 2020			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

In 2015 the Council adopted the Fylde Borough Council Coastal Strategy and Action Plan 2015 to 2032. As this was a new area of activity for the Council and a new policy document the Council took the decision to review the document on an annual basis for an undetermined period.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Director of Development Services

LINK TO INFORMATION

Fylde Council Website <https://new.fylde.gov.uk/council/coastal-strategy/>

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

To provide members with an annual monitoring report on the progress of the Coastal Strategy /Action Plan through the appropriate service committee.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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FYLDE COASTAL STRATEGY- UPDATE

At its meeting on 25 March 2015, Cabinet *RESOLVED*:

- To formally adopt the Fylde Council Coastal Strategy and associated action plan to deliver the long term Vision for the Regeneration of Fylde's Coastline from 2015 -2032.*
- To establish a project board to oversee the delivery of major infrastructure projects relating to the Coast, commencing with the Restoration of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens linking with the replacement sea defence project.*
- The production of an annual monitoring report to report the progress of the Coastal Strategy /Action Plan through the appropriate service committee.*

1. Considerable progress is being made with the delivery of the Coastal Strategy, the major key actions have been identified and summarised below -

➤ **Theme 1 Green Infrastructure and Landscape** Fylde Council has been approached by Natural England regarding the North West phase of the England Coast Path. The England Coast Path is a proposed long-distance National Trail which will follow the coastline of England. When complete, it will be 2,795 miles in length. The North West section of the trail will stretch from the Scottish Border to the Welsh Border, skirting the Lake District, Morecambe Bay, Fylde Coast and Liverpool. The England Coast Path has been possible because of a new law in the UK, the Right of Coastal Access, giving to people for the first time the right of access around all England's open coast. The Council will work with Natural England to progress the trail including defining routes and incorporating associated way-marking into the Coastal Signage Strategy. The project to link Lytham Green with the new open space fronting Lytham Quays (the new green) was in part funded by a Section 106 contribution from the Danbro development. The first phase is being developed to include signage and interpretation material and was implemented in 2018. The second phase will be the physical construction of a footpath link from Lytham Green around Jubilee House and onto the Lytham Quays Estate which is currently being designed and may be the subject of capital bid.

➤ **Theme 2 Coastal Protection –**

(ii) Coast Protection Scheme

Fairhaven to Church Scar Coast Protection Scheme

The Council has completed renewing the sea defences here and plans to complete the residual promenade works by June 2020.

➤ **Theme 3 Water Quality**

The major action is the implementation of the new bathing water directive. The first report on water quality under the revised directive was at the end of 2015 bathing water season.

2019 Water Quality Results

St Anne's Pier	Good
St Anne's North	Sufficient

The Bathing Water classification for St Anne's Pier is classed as good for 2019 however the classification for St Anne's North has been classified as sufficient. The deterioration of the water quality at St Anne's North is of concern to the Council and the Environment Agency.

The classification between good and sufficient is minimal – there was a deterioration in E-Coli at both sites and a deterioration in IE at St Anne's North, but the IE result slightly improved at St Anne's from 2018 to 2019.

The Environment Agency has identified St Anne's North as a priority bathing water. Officers from the Council are meeting with representatives from the Environment Agency, Ribble Rivers Trust and United Utilities to draw up an action plan for the 2020 bathing season.

➤ **Theme 4 Nature Conservation and Habitat Improvement**

Fylde encompasses a number of nationally ecologically significant coastal assets including the Fylde Sand Dunes and Ribble and Alt Estuary Sites of Special Scientific Interest. To support in the protection, promotion and management of such assets, a team of Rangers and a Coastal Patrol Officers was appointed in April 2018. Following a year of establishment, the team proved successful in delivering a range of environmental projects, events and activities alongside community/ volunteer groups. The key priority for the team during 2020– 2021 will be the roll out of a new Fylde Schools Education Programme, targeted towards providing National Curriculum based classes and workshops to primary and secondary students, facilitating greater engagement in Fylde's natural, coastal environment.

Fylde Council is also successfully leading a partnership with Blackpool Council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust in the management of the Fylde Sand Dunes, ensuring the protection and improvement of the dune habitat in its role as soft sea defence and nationally significant conservation area.

Environment Agency grant funding to the total value of £717,000 was secured in December 2016 by the partnership to continue the project and associated staff and operational costs for a further five years. The funding is being utilised to fund the Fylde Sand Dune Project Team as well as manage and improve over 80 hectares of dune estate. Persimmon Homes on the old Pontin's site also contributed £225,000 in Section 106 funding in March 2017 to cover the costs of an Area Conservation Ranger and transport for a 5-year period. There is a £40,000 budget included within the section 106 funding to cover environmental projects in the area, to mitigate the effects of increased usage from new residents in the area.

The priority for the Fylde Sand Dune Project Team in 2020 - 2021 is to complete an improvement scheme which was approved by the Tourism and Leisure Committee in December 2019. The scheme can be broken down into 3 distinct elements.

The first project element will focus on improving the interpretation and way-marking of the Fylde Sand Dunes in line with the Council's Coastal Signage Strategy. The dunes do not presently contain public signage. The Fylde Sand Dunes Project Team have developed a comprehensive signage plan including the design and location of interpretation boards and way-marking posts. The signage will serve to promote the national value of the dunes as well as guide visitors to the beach along defined trails, thus reducing trampling of sensitive dune habitat. All signage will meet visitor needs as well as the historic, aesthetic and environmental sensitivities of the site.

The second project element will focus on improving visitor access to and through the dunes. Despite its open aspect character, Fylde's dune entrances should present possibilities and opportunity for passers-by and provide a visitor with their first impression of the site. It is therefore paramount that entrances are welcoming, attractive and safe. Defined entrances guide visitors on a defined path or route, reducing uncontrolled trampling and disturbance of dune habitat and associated wildlife. The Fylde Sand Dunes Project Team have designed new dune entrance features which complement the character of the site and make use of attractive timber and rope fencing.

The third project element involves the completion of re-profiling and stabilisation works to the dunes on Clifton Drive North, opposite the Persimmon Homes development. The work received planning approval in December 2019 and will reduce the volume of windblown sand lost from the dune system onto the adjacent highway and Persimmon Homes development. Operations have begun to lower the roadside dunes, creating a stable and reduced height profile. The re-profiled dunes will then be stabilised utilising eco matting and Marram Grass plug plants.

➤ **Theme 5 Visitor Economy**

The Visitor Economy makes up an important industry in Fylde, accounting for 1 in 10 jobs and attracting 3.3 million visitors generating £264 million spending in the local economy each year.

Regular networking events and direct dialogue are undertaken with Fylde based tourism businesses, plus tourism officers from around the county, including Blackpool, Wyre and the county's official Destination Management Organisation (DMO) Marketing Lancashire.

The Council's Tourism Officer is working with partners to organise the major events such as the Lytham 1940s Wartime Weekend, the Lytham Festival and St Anne's International Kite Festival, plus Gala, Carnival and Club Days.

The formation of the St Anne's on Sea Enterprise Partnership under the Coastal Communities Initiative seeks to bring together a variety of organisations to promote and enhance the offer of the town. It has adopted a Strategy and Action Plan to promote and enhance the visitor offer and the Council is a formal partner. An important aspect of its remit is to promote and extend the visitor offer through the expansion of events.

The Council allows motorhomes to park overnight for up to three nights on St Anne's Swimming Pool Car Park and North Beach Car Park. This encourages a sector of the tourism economy to explore Fylde's coastal strip and contribute to the local economy.

For some time the forward strategies for St. Anne's, notably the 2020 Vision document has promoted the 'Classic Resort' concept which is aimed at striving for high quality standards for the resort that would, if implemented, help to significantly promote the visitor (and resident) experience. It is aimed at enhancing the reputation of the resort as a high-quality destination. This has obvious economic benefits. The implementation of the idea would be brought about by defining quality standards both in respect of physical qualities such as heritage, maintenance and management, green spaces, beach and water quality, attractive public realm and building quality standards alongside other experiential qualities including events, dining quality, hotel and accommodation standards and hospitality.

The Classic Resort idea would need the participation of several agencies and partners which should be easy to define and ultimately achieve with all the parties being 'on message' in respect of the role they play in achieving the standards agreed. The most obvious way of achieving this would be by way of a partnership set up with the precise remit of agreeing standards and action planning to achieve them. St. Anne's already offers a high-quality experience and offer in any respects but the advantage of such an initiative would be that all the partners would understand the specific role they play in achieving the vision and can meet the targets accordingly. The Planning Regeneration Team have produced a number of documents that discuss this initiative and the concept could be taken forward as an integral and important part of any revised strategy and action plan for St. Anne's.

➤ **Theme 6 Culture, Leisure, Sport and Recreation**

The Council is working in partnership with the Arts Council and the Fylde Arts Partnership to develop a strategic framework to maximise arts opportunities across the Fylde Coast and identify opportunities for investment. A specialist arts development officer is in post.

The development of an arts project known as Coastal Explorers is underway which could see a dedicated arts related built facility trialled on the coast close to St Paul's Car Park, Fairhaven. This would bring in third party arts organisations on a scheduled programme. The Council has allocated funds to this project should external funding be achieved, including from the Arts Council and the Big Lottery Fund. If successful, this trial may result in a further development in the future.

The Council is working with Sport England to develop sports facilities and programmes across the Borough. The Council is proposing to submit a bid to Sport England to provide multi-sport classroom facilities and changing facilities at Fairhaven Lake.

Through the planning process a sports-built facilities review is being undertaken which will inform Future Leisure provision across the Borough. This will be used as an evidence base to support the Borough Wide Local Plan. This work was completed in 2016 and continues to influence projects across the Borough.

The Council created a water play facility (Splash!) on the Promenade Gardens on the site of the former paddling pool. This project, which has included the involvement of a local Friends group, has regenerated an area of the Promenade Gardens that isn't well used and provided a facility that has attracted residents and visitors alike.

One idea being promoted is that of enhancing the strategic links between the parks of St. Anne's. Lytham and Fairhaven as a sort of 'royal parks type' concept. The variety and historic significance of the parks and open spaces for the twin towns is well known but the links between them less so. This idea is one of linking them together a form of literal or digital trail from Lytham Hall to Ashton Gardens including the Green, Church Scar, Fairhaven, Promenade Gardens and Ashton Gardens which provides access to a series of 'jewels' which have all different historical, cultural and physical contexts. Further information on this can be provided by contacting the Regeneration Team. A short paper outlining the idea has been prepared.

➤ **Theme 7 Heritage Assets**

The Council's Heritage Strategy is now adopted. Specific on-going actions are as follows:

- Formation of a Heritage Forum which is aimed at drawing together a number of organisations and individuals that can help to deliver the projects contained within the approved Action Plan, which forms the implementation element of the Strategy. This will be established in 2020.
- The compilation of the Local List of Buildings that was 'piloted' in the Fairhaven area in 2016 & 2017 has now been rolled out and is now across the Borough. Lytham and St. Anne's has now been reviewed and local

listing completed with some 113 buildings now on the local list. A review of conservation areas is part of the broader Borough heritage review and is commencing this calendar year. Undertaking of conservation area appraisals and management plans that are extremely valuable for development management purposes will follow on from the review.

- The Council is working with Lytham Hall Partnership in working with a strategic management plan for Lytham Hall, the Borough's only grade 1 listed building. The Council is working in partnership with the Pier Company to produce a shared plan for the future maintenance and management of the pier. The council applied for Coastal Revival Fund grant funding to assist in bringing forward structural repairs and enhancement to ensure its long-term viability and economic success. The outcome was a grant of £48,100 which has resulted in enhancements to the Pier forecourt with new paving and period lighting, structural repairs as part of an ongoing maintenance regime, the restoration and fitting out of an extension to the Deck Café and the proposed establishment of an exhibition of Pier history.
- The Council is currently putting together a formal application to Arts Council England (ACE) for accreditation of the Lytham St Anne's Art Collection, which is held at the Town Hall in Trust. A specialist Collections Development Officer is in post to manage of the collection, work with partners, including Lancashire County Council and progress the accreditation application which will set the benchmark for future management. Recent investment from the Council includes a specialist arts store at the Town Hall.

➤ **Theme 8 Place Making**

- In December 2018, the Council was successful in securing the second-round capital grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £1,476,600 for the restoration of Fairhaven Lake & Gardens. The grant has been awarded on the condition that match funding of a further £960,897 is provided by Fylde Council, through internal and external financial contributions, providing a total capital budget of £2,437,497.
- On the award of a second-round grant, the HLF specified a list of 'approved purposes' that must be achieved in order to deliver the key aspects of the project that were specified within the application. The approved purposes must be achieved and are conditional to claiming the grant.

The 'approved purposes' that must be achieved under the terms of the second-round grant are:

- **Lake Works:** Improving lake condition, water quality, interest and accessibility by:
 - Removing silt, installing aeration-pumps and restoring edges and footpaths;
 - Upgrading pontoon;
 - Forming a beach;
 - Preparing island to be a forest school;
 - Creating a winter wader roost on another island; working with Fylde Bird Club and RPSB.
- **Historic Buildings:**
 - Pavilion Café: removing inappropriate extensions to expose original features, including colonnaded veranda and internal cornice details; remodeling east elevation to restore roof based on the original architect's intentions; reconfiguring the interior, levelling the split floor and introducing accessible toilets;
 - Pagoda: exposing original timber and ironwork roof structure and removing alterations to open space as a welcome and interpretation center
 - Boathouse (to become the Watersports Centre): reconfiguring to provide a classroom and facilities for lake users (toilets, changing facilities and storage) within a new insulated shell.
- **Landscaping:**
 - Restoring to use Mawson's Japanese Lagoon Garden;
 - Upgrading tennis courts;

- Installing adventure play park;
- Providing sustainable tree/shrub displays suitable for the challenging coastal environment;
- Creating Mawson's Lookout over the Estuary;
- Working with Lancashire Gardens Trust, establishing a volunteer-run plant nursery.
- **Interpretation:** Providing interpretation to include:
 - Welcome panels;
 - Pagoda exhibition;
 - Trail waymarking and information;
 - Website improvements;
 - Temporary exhibition area.
- **Activity Programme** for the general public and targeted groups, including:
 - Community archaeology dig(s) at the Japanese Garden and site of the World War II observatory;
 - Annual Events: regatta, open day, Heritage Open Days, Big Picnic;
 - Annual on-site and outreach talks and guided walks, including work-in-progress tours;
 - Memories workshops and oral history collection leading to Community Theatre performances;
 - Running a Heritage Hub in the Pagoda, with changing exhibitions prepared by local groups, including those not well represented in the heritage;
 - Family activities: drop-in sessions, orienteering, buggy walks, Family Heritage Afternoons targeted at hard-to-reach audiences;
 - Specially designed activities for users of health and wellbeing services and children and family's agencies;
 - An expanded programme of watersports activities including swimming, sailing, canoeing, kayaking and paddle boarding;
 - Informal learning resources: quizzes, trials, self-guiding leaflets, web-based resources.
- **Formal Education:**
 - Delivering activity programme for primary schools;
 - Offering work experience opportunities for local college students studying tourism, media, landscape and horticulture;
 - Creating and making available on-line resources.
- **Volunteering:**
 - Training and developing new and existing volunteers to support the park and contribute to the Friends of Fairhaven Lake, the whole park Steering Group, a Heritage Advisory Panel and a Youth Steering Group;
 - Appointing a Volunteer coordinator.
- **Staffing:**
 - Employing a Project Officer (FTE) and an Activity Development Officer (0.6FTE).
- **Marketing**
 - Marketing the park's offer to ensure take-up.

The current capital works will be delivered between June 2019 and March 2022, with the Activity and Events programme running concurrently for 3 years until January 2022.

Other Place making/Public Realm Projects

The next phases of the Regeneration Programme for Lytham and St Anne's have commenced and include enhancements to Wood Street, Lytham Town centre and the Square Link.

Phase 3 of Wood Street commenced in February but was put on hold due to the CV19 pandemic but is to re-commence on the 11th May. The £230,000 scheme should be completed in July.

The next phase of the Regeneration Programme to follow will include the Square Link, which will link St Anne's pier with the Square (£210,000) and will be commenced following the completion of Wood Street but may be phased due to the onset of Winter but will be completed by Spring 2021.

The Lytham Regeneration Scheme is being prepared an consultation will take place as soon as practicable. Subject to Committee approval the works may start with a gradual refurbishment of Clifton Street/Pleasant Street and Market Square and also include a 're-lighting' of the Beach Road A584 with decorative lighting to provide a significant enhancement to the seafront area. The works referred to should commence later in the financial year.

Phase 4 of the Woodlands Road Public Realm scheme (£110,000) is now complete. The only outstanding element is the tree planting, which is in the process of completion.

➤ **Theme 9 Access and Transportation**

The key actions of the Coastal Strategy in terms of transport have been fed into the Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Master Plan. To improve communication with Highway England a Highways and Transportation Liaison Group has been proposed, to include members and officers of Fylde Council and Lancashire County Council.

Coastal strategy action to develop a network of pedestrian and cycle links to and around the coast fed into Lancashire Cycling and Walking Strategy.

Funding for the proposed M55 link road is being confirmed to achieve accelerated construction of the scheme as soon as possible.

The Coastal Strategy sets out several areas for improvement and development. Progress and achievements include:

- The initiation of improvements to road surfaces on certain key routes by Lancashire County Council, including resurfacing of Station Road/Park View Road in Lytham and the surface dressing of North and South Promenade in St Anne's and a section of the A584 in Lytham.
- The new M55 Junction2/Preston Western Distributor has started construction which, once completed, should help alleviate congestion from Junction 3 through Wrea Green towards Warton.
- The electrification of the Blackpool North Railway line has been completed by Network Rail, including the refurbishment of Kirkham and Wesham Railway Station. Options for improving the Blackpool South line, either by increasing the frequency of services or improving connectivity are being considered. The provision of level access to Squires Gate Station to make it accessible to all is currently being led by Fylde Council with the process of purchasing a section of land ongoing.
- With the imminent completion and opening of the Fairhaven to Church Scar sea defence works, the pedestrian walkways and cycleways along this stretch have been significantly improved. Most footpaths along Lytham Green have been resurfaced in recent years.
- The details of the Cleveleys to Pierhead (Liverpool) section of the England Coastal Path, which is to pass through the Fylde Borough, are due to be published by Natural England shortly. Following a consultation process and ratification by the Secretary of State the new footpath will have improvement works carried out and signage implemented.
- Lancashire County Council are due to start developing the Fylde cycling and walking infrastructure plan. Separately funding has been received for the development of a segregated cycleway along Clifton Drive North between Starr Gate and Todmorden Road to be completed by March 2021. Details on implementing cycle contraflows on St Andrews Road South and Wood Street in St Anne's and Clifton Street North in Lytham are being developed. Proposals for adjustments to the highway to improve cycle safety on the A584 to Freckleton are being developed.

- Work is ongoing to define clear public entrances onto the sand dunes through new signage, way marker posts and guide fencing. Raised boardwalk routes are planned through the dunes to prevent trampling of sensitive vegetation and wildflowers where practical to do so. A routine of mowing natural pathways through the dunes is being implemented to minimise disturbance to the natural habitat. Improvements to pathways and way markings within the Green Drive Woodland Biological Heritage Site are planned for the current financial year.
- Through the implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework, new sections of road and junctions include pedestrian and cycle facilities, for example accesses off Church Road in Warton by Blackfield End Farm Developments to include sections of full width pathways and crossing points to improve local connectivity.
- New highway developments, as highlighted in the Fylde Local Plan, have green infrastructure principles applied to them including the Skippool to Windy Harbour and Preston Western Distributor schemes.

➤ **Theme 10 Marketing Promotion and Publicity**

The Council has developed a signage strategy for the Fylde Coastal Strip with the aim to improve navigation, information and interpretation along the coast as well as safety and security of the users of that area. A capital budget of £60k has been set aside in the 2019/20 Councils Capital Programme to enable the existing signage to be reviewed and new signage to be introduced to improve the visitor experience and create an identity to the Coast.

In 2019 the Council achieved Keep Britain Tidy's Seaside Award for St Anne's Amenity Beach. The scheme is a nationwide standard for the best beaches across the UK which guarantees visitors will find a clean, safe, attractive and well managed beach.

The Council achieved 6 Green Flag Awards and 36 In Bloom Awards in 2019.

Communications are achieved through dedicated Facebook and Twitter accounts which are tourism facing (Discover Fylde) and Fairhaven Lake accounts, plus the www.discoverfylde.co.uk website which carries events and information about the coast.

The Council is a partner along with St Anne's Town Council, Blackpool Council and Wyre Council and other partners in a Fylde wide coastal project, [Access Fylde Coast](#) funded by £985K of Coastal Communities Funding looking at improving the coastal destination from a visitor perspective including a range of marketing opportunities (apps and web), business support, disability awareness training and events.

The viability of a Blue Flag Award has been explored in 2019 for Fylde beaches. A full mock Blue Flag Award assessment was undertaken by the Parks and Coastal Services team against the award criteria and a decision was made to pursue an application for St Anne's Amenity Beach pending 'Excellent' water quality status. A number of infrastructure and interpretation improvements has been made in anticipation of an application and to heighten visitor experience.

Fylde Council was successful in retaining a Seaside Award from 2018 - 2019 for St Anne's Amenity Beach. An annual application is submitted by the Parks and Coastal Services team to Keep Britain Tidy to raise the profile of our excellent coastline. Seaside Awards are presented to the best beaches in England and celebrate the quality and diversity of our coast.