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Dorset Coast Strategy

(2023-2026)



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Executive Summary

To be written when strategy is being finalised.

The purpose of the Dorset Coast Strategy

This is a Strategy for the whole of the Dorset coast and for the members of Dorset Coast Forum. It will inspire and influence members to work in partnership to deliver and promote sustainable management of the coast, so that the vision and objectives are reached, and the Dorset's coast can be enjoyed by local communities, visitors, and future generations. It aligns with wider policies and strategies relevant to these objectives.

Vision for the Dorset Coast

"The Dorset coast and marine environment, its rich history and biodiversity, are enhanced and thriving for us and future generations.

Coastal communities are healthy, resilient, and connected with natural processes, whilst being supported by a diverse, sustainable, and thriving coastal economy.

Both residents and visitors alike are using the coast responsibly for enjoyment, education, and inspiration."

Overview of Dorset Coast

Printed and PDF copies of the Dorset Coast Strategy will include a simple map of the Dorset Coast showing locations of coastal towns (below map is for reference only).

For the website version of the Dorset Coast Strategy, an interactive Dorset Explorer map will be created with relevant GIS layers to provide more in-depth information of the coast and surrounding seas including all designation areas.



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Challenges and Opportunities for the Dorset Coast

Challenges	Opportunities
Loss of biodiversity and pressures on natural habitats.	Enhance support for the natural environment – Existing and expanding range of landscapes, habitats and species and supporting partners. Plus development of Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Changing coast and climate – Carbon reduction, flooding, coastal erosion, adaptation and resilience.	Engage communities in our changing coast – Community resilience and adaptation, education, STEM, and volunteering. Involving communities in helping to combat climate change and decision making. Ensure opportunities are in place for young people to be fully engaged.
Water Pollution – River and seas.	Partnership working and involving communities - Creates greater benefits. Regularly sharing accessible information on issues, challenges, and potential solutions.
Visitor management – Overcrowding in peak tourist spots, parking, littering and traffic.	Benefit from tourism – £1.3bn visitor spend and 30,584 tourism jobs (Visit Dorset, 2021). Greater benefits can be gained from sustainable tourism management. Continued visitor management required due to increase in ‘staycations’.
Safety and wildlife disturbance.	Partnership working and joined up messaging – Jointly creating and sharing codes of conduct, interpretation, education, and clear safety guidance.
Heritage and human impact – Damage to heritage features.	Interpretation and celebration – Exciting range of historical features & landscapes, as well as local stories that can be recorded and shared. Building respect and ownership of our heritage.
Areas of deprivation – Ageing population, poor health & well-being, lack of transport, actual/perceived lack of access to the coast.	Improve health & well-being – Creating safe, accessible, inclusive, and good quality blue spaces. Improvement of public and sustainable transport. Connecting communities to the coast through improved physical access as well as providing activities for local people e.g., ‘buddying’ programmes.
Local and external influences on coastal economies – Plus seasonal and limited employment opportunities.	Support and boost coastal economies to provide wider benefits – e.g., Fishing and aquaculture industry can provide sustainable/local food sources. Ports and Harbours support recreation, fishing, trade, boat building and tourism industries. Increased supporting for the natural environment and changing coast can lead to innovation and new jobs. Promote full range of coastal employment opportunities to young people.
Decline in appearance and character of coastal areas – Dorset’s seaside towns will continue to compete with other UK tourist destinations.	Utilise creativity and design to support coastal improvements and economies – Maintain and enhance the quality and uniqueness of the Dorset Coast and its towns through public realm and landscape design. Creative industries can help support this opportunity, as well as many other opportunities related to well-being, messaging, interpretation and celebration and engaging communities.

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Objectives

The five objectives below are in the format of hashtags, keeping them simple and allowing for continued use in communications and messaging. The objectives bring together, highlight, celebrate and inspire the work of DCF members. The use of hashtags also introduces the strategy to a wider audience. Under each objective is a set of deliverables. These have been identified by DCF members and are considered to be priorities for the Dorset Coast.

1. #EnjoyTheCoast

Enhance inclusive access to promote the coast as a place for everyone to enjoy. Protect and enhance Dorset coast's much loved blue spaces, with enhancements created in a sensitive, natural approach to consider local heritage and culture, to further connect people and communities to the coast in their work and recreation.



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#EnjoyTheCoast - Deliverables

- **Celebrating culture, arts, and heritage** – Creative placemaking, telling the wider story of an area's history, visit and learn about historical sites along the coast, activities in lesser-known parts of the coast.
- **Partnership led programmes and campaigns** – Year-round culture and crafts.
- **Interactive engagement** – E.g., creating opportunities for people to share photos and stories, dark skies enjoyment, wildlife identification and recording, visitor centres to help people appreciate and enjoy the coast.
- **Linking the coast to neighbouring green spaces** to encourage active travel, reduce peak pressure at 'honeypot sites' and create wildlife and infrastructure links.
- **Health & well-being** – Connecting communities to the coast through activities and infrastructural links, creating/maintaining good quality blue spaces.
- **Continued visitor management** - Avoid adding to pressures and problems at hotspots.
- **Improving inclusive access to the coast** – and creating greater opportunities for sustainable transport.



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2. #RespectTheCoast

Safe, considerate behaviour will be encouraged when visiting the coast, minimising the impact while maximising access and enjoyment. Information on code of conduct will be shared through a variety of mediums, allowing people to enjoy the coast responsibly. This will ensure the Dorset coast is maintained and enhanced for future residents, stakeholders, and visitors to experience.



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#RespectTheCoast - Deliverables

- **Coastal safety** – Partnership led development and promotion of safety guidance e.g., for coastal walks, sea swimming, vessel safety and non-motorised water sports. Highlighting how people can better identify and manage risks.
- **Behaviour** – Partnership led development and promotion of codes of conduct e.g., for wildlife disturbance, noise pollution, woodland and heathland fires, cliff falls, litter, and no anchor zones. Continued education of visitors, framing messages as a positive change.
- **Improve understanding and awareness** – leading to greater respect.
- **Giving people the tools to avoid/reduce impacts** of their visit to the coast e.g., water filling stations, reduced take away packaging, eco-moorings, bird hides, viewing platforms.
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** – Identifying new and enhanced ways to support wildlife. Sensitive habitats and species could be identified and prioritised for additional management.
- **Respect wildlife** and not getting too close. Continued/improved management of recreational access in designated sites during sensitive times of the year e.g., overwintering birds in Poole Harbour, nesting seabirds on Purbeck, angling for nesting bream.
- **Expand sustainable fishing practices** – Protection of designations (MMO and Southern IFCA led), promoting local sustainable fish and aquaculture industry to coastal communities and visitors.



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3. #CoastalInnovation

The Dorset coast will lead the way in innovative solutions to the challenges we face. These solutions will be implemented in every aspect of the coast through socio-economic, technological, and environmental approaches. The Dorset coast will strongly feature in the latest research, technology, and development, embracing opportunities to future-proof our coastal communities, industries, environment, and economies.



#CoastalInnovation - Deliverables

- **Recognising innovation in its various forms** – Not just technological, but also environmental management, community engagement, research and monitoring, youth involvement and community decision making.
- **Innovation in all sectors** – Fisheries, tourism, recreation, carbon reduction, climate adaptation and mitigation, nature recovery, biodiversity net-gain, nature-based solutions.
- **Greening the grey** – increasing green spaces in urban areas to improve lives and enhance the environment using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), green roofs, green walls, tree planting, and urban gardens.
- **Investment in technology** – To support monitoring and research, carbon reduction, industry, visitor management, communications, and climate adaptation.
- **Applying latest research** – Linking Universities and research institutions with partners on the ground to improve application and delivery.
- **Promoting Citizen Science initiatives** – Increasing involvement of communities and young people in our work.
- **Partnership collaboration** – Expanding working partnerships to include a wider range of expertise and knowledge.
- **Green finance and Environment Banks** – Investing in and supporting local nature recovery and biodiversity net gain.



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4. #CoastalConnection

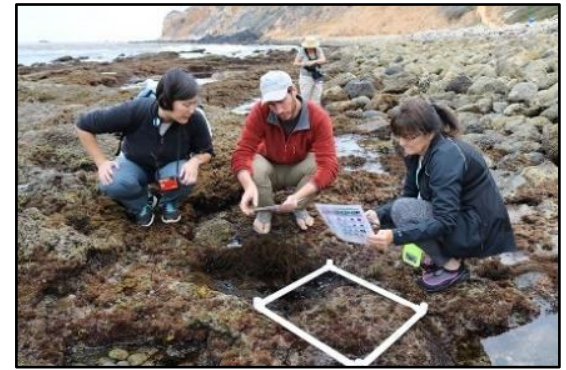
Opportunities will be taken to connect communities with the coastline, increasing access, awareness and understanding. People of all demographics will have the opportunity to engage with the coast. Collaboration will be encouraged between public, private, and voluntary sectors, pooling resources to engage communities and stakeholders in the sustainable management of the coast.



awareness understanding
networking stem
access local-pride education
communication inspire schools
encourage citizen-science collaboration
partnership inspiration
wellbeing community food-security
ocean-literacy volunteering
blue-health empowering-communities

#CoastalConnection - Deliverables

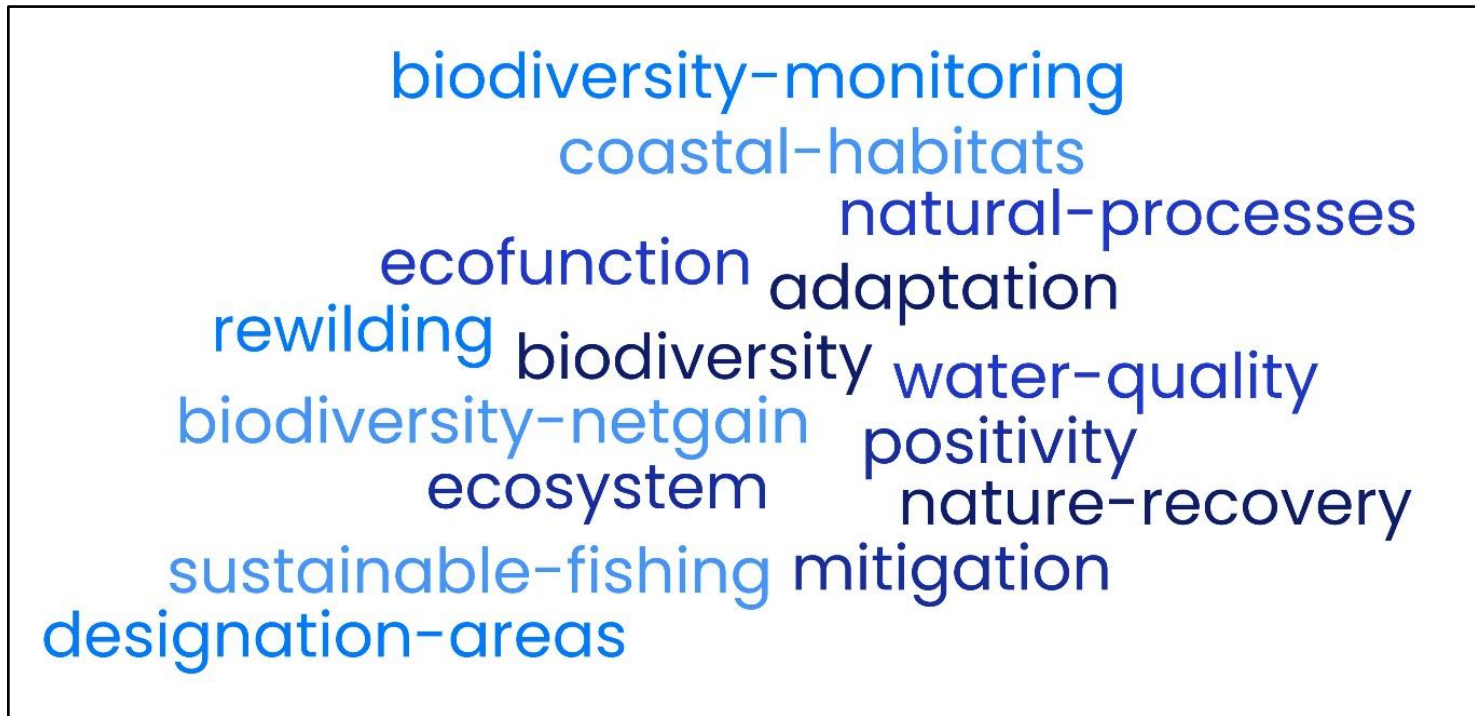
- **Inclusive approach** – Delivering a range of activities that help to connect people from all backgrounds and abilities to the coast. Community-led activity themes could include arts and culture, recreation and sports, nature & wildlife and historical storytelling, as well as general opportunities for people to socialise and have fun.
- **Youth engagement** – Expanding opportunities for education, citizen science and volunteering. Working with schools and youth groups to encourage young people to understand and value historic sites, wildlife, coastal enterprise, and our changing coast.
- **Developing new partnership approaches to delivery** – Between members, organisations, business sectors, and the community.
- **Communicate benefits** – Increasing awareness of how the coast can improve 'blue health' and wellbeing.
- **Encouraging public realm schemes to include creativity** – Creating a sense of place and maintaining the appearance of much-loved areas of the coast.
- **Infrastructure connection** – Linking coastal paths and wayfinding with the wider rights of way networks in towns and villages.
- **Visitor centres or information hubs** – Large or small, these help to connect visitors to the coast through information giving, interactive displays and activities that encourage visitors to explore the coast in different ways.



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5. #CoastalRecovery

Dorset's coastal landscapes and seascapes will be prioritised, protecting the wide range of species and habitats. Members, residents, and visitors will not only protect, but enhance Dorset's natural environment. We will work with natural processes and nature-based solutions to enhance harmony between coastal communities, industries, and the environment in which we live and work.



#CoastalRecovery - Deliverables

- **Development of Local Nature Recovery Strategy** – Working together to restore and expand habitats, protect, and increase wildlife, combat climate change, and benefit our communities. DCF members are key to the development and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in coastal areas.
- **Enhance existing and create new natural habitats** – Recent examples include the UK's first super nature reserve in Purbeck, Stour Valley Park and Wild Woodbury in Bere Regis. Identify opportunities to link these areas and create natural 'buffers.'
- **Promote sustainable coastal environments and habitats** - Champion the natural environment, ensuring that people and wildlife on the Dorset Coast benefit from members' projects, activities, and policies.
- **Water Quality** – When tackling water pollution greater benefits can be achieved by empowering local communities and working in partnership with water companies, farmers and other key stakeholders. Major structural solutions are long term, therefore open discussion and regularly sharing accessible information on issues, challenges and potential solutions are vital to take everyone on this journey.
- **Sustainable fishing and regenerative farming** - Working towards a balance between sustainable fisheries and farming with land and sea environments that protect wildlife as well as supporting food production and resilience.
- **Connecting people to nature** – Continue to inspire people and communities to learn about, value and act for wildlife. Deliver a range of activities that are accessible for people from all backgrounds and abilities. Importantly, involve young people to learn about their coast, wildlife and employment opportunities that are available in the environment sector, creating 'inspirational leaders' for the future.



Monitoring and evaluation

As a part of the Dorset Coast Strategy, the Dorset Coast Forum will share relevant data and reports as they are published, using the strategy objectives to communicate the topic. These will be shared in the DCF E-News, website, and social media platforms. This approach will provide a regular assessment of the Strategy's impact on the work of members and stakeholders as well as identify new needs and priorities. It also shares the work of members, encouraging partnership working and collaboration.

Regular calls for new reports or projects will be made, encouraging and giving members a chance to share their work with a wider audience. We will also assess the impact and use of the strategy among members, reporting back on this annually. This will allow us to review and reflect on the success of the strategy, making necessary changes at the end of the 3-year strategy period.

Call to Action!

How can members utilise and support the Dorset Coast Strategy?

- Deliverables - To work towards the vision of the Dorset Coast Strategy, members can identify ways in which their organisation can contribute to and support deliverables. If facilitation is required, the DCF team can help form project ideas, link with other members and develop partnership projects. Greater benefits are achieved through working together more closely whilst engaging coastal communities. DCF is a resource that supports members to achieve this aim.
- Messaging - Utilise the #objectives for highlighting, celebrating and linking up the work of DCF members. To support the Dorset Coast strategy and monitor its impact, we are asking members to use the objective hashtags in communications and messaging, on social media, at events and when delivering campaigns. Guidance will be provided in the form of a toolkit (in development).
- Share data and reports – If your organisation has new data or reports that help to monitor and evaluate key indicators of challenges and opportunities of the Dorset Coast, share with the DCF Team so that this can be circulated with other members. By sharing this information more widely, members can recognise the impact of their work as a whole and can identify key gaps that need to be addressed going forward.
- Code of Conduct – There are many codes of conduct and messaging on behaviour targeted at users of the coast. By working in partnership and with other members, messaging can be simplified. For more information, see the DCF Code of Conduct webpage (currently in development).

Dorset Coast Forum's Role

Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) is an independent strategic coastal partnership that brings together key stakeholders to work in partnership on a whole range of social, environmental, and economic issues and opportunities that are relevant to the Dorset coast, its communities, and its seas. Through working in partnership, DCF develops and shares ideas, information, and expertise.

DCF has over 480 members from around 260 private, voluntary, and public organisations. This membership is special as it brings with it a vast amount of expertise, local knowledge and a deep understanding of Dorset's coast and its inshore waters.

DCF is guided by an independent Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretariat, alongside a Steering Group who help steer and provide oversight of the work of the DCF team with support from the wider membership.

For more information, please see the DCF website: www.dorsetcoast.com.

With thanks to the Dorset Coast Forum core funders:



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