



BACKGROUND TO PROMENADE REMODELLING PROJECT

November 2021

INTRODUCTION

A 2020 Hoylake Vision Consultation, which was run by independent consultants PLACED and funded by Locality, clearly identified the promenade and beach as key areas of concern for respondents. Many comments were made about lack of facilities but also about the issues of drainage and impact on the beach (1), the causes of which appear to be complex and multi-faceted.

A number of ideas were put forward, and it will be possible to incorporate further ideas within a future iteration of the Masterplan document and align with emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) policy **BR1. SEAFRONT RECREATION; NDP Objective 4** [To more fully realise the potential of the promenade as an accessible leisure and tourism destination with an appropriate range of facilities for residents and visitors.] and **NDP Objective 9** [To improve pedestrian links between the town centre, the promenade and the railway stations to meet the needs and expectations of residents and visitors.] It may also be possible to strengthen or add new related objectives, priorities and policies in the NDP.

The management group of Hoylake Vision identified the UK government's **Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme** as an example of a possible source of funding that Wirral Council (WMBC) could apply for. In March 2021 the government awarded 25 Local Authorities an average of £6 million each for similar projects.

If high level proposals can be developed by the management group of the forum and if we can then demonstrate clear support from the forum and wider community it would add significant weight to any future funding bid by the council. There will likely be other sources of funding emerging as climate change and increased storminess present ever increasing challenges, in particular for coastal communities.

It is important to be clear that Hoylake Vision would not be the funding applicant or developer. It is also important to emphasise that the proposals are NOT to pedestrianise the promenade.

THE VISION

The ambition is to resolve some or all of the current drainage issues while remodelling the promenade to be more attractive for residents and visitors. The emerging Design Code will include high level examples of similar schemes which include some or all of:

- Sustainable Drainage systems
- Porous surfacing for road and pavement
- EV charging points
- Cycle lane
- All terrain wheelchair hire
- Appropriately scaled and sited cafe / F&B facility
- Planters
- Wetland soakaways / planted areas
- Single level road and walkway with raised pedestrian crossovers
- Delineation by markings or material for accessibility and pedestrian /road safety
- Lower-level lighting scheme
- Landscape viewing points (2)
- Seating
- Foot washing station
- Any other ideas that may emerge

These could be included in any designs commissioned by WMBC, who would likely need to undertake further consultation in the event the project proceeds.

THE PLAN

Hoylake Vision Community Planning Forum will further develop the high-level ideas already incorporated in the Masterplan and emerging design code. This will require a further process of consultation with the community and liaison with WMBC over the coming months. We will need press coverage in local and hyperlocal media as well as on social media. A dedicated email address will be set up for consultation responses.

We will be including objectives, priorities and policies relating to the promenade in the emerging NDP in due course but these cannot be finalised until the Local Plan is published (3). As these are 'committed to paper' and further consulted upon, they continue to gain weight even before going to referendum. All consultation will be recorded in a **Consultation Statement**. (4)

NOTES

1. The NDP boundary stops at the promenade wall. However it is not possible to entirely separate out the promenade and beach as the historic, cultural, economic and environmental importance of both are inextricably linked. Any proposals for the promenade must therefore be set within the wider context and decisions made by the LA and Natural England on **future beach management** will be relevant. The current NDP states: “The Council’s Beach Management Plan should be supported and followed **with a regular review of practices for monitoring development.**” This refers to the 2010-2015 Beach Management Agreement, which included measures to retain the amenity beach using techniques including raking and application of herbicides. However, that agreement has now expired and WMBC are therefore applying for consent for individual activities. The **review of practices for monitoring development** and subsequent process of public engagement being undertaken therefore aligns with this NDP priority. The Masterplan lists as an opportunity [page 48] “With Natural England assent potential to retain an “amenity beach” area while allowing natural succession along the rest of the foreshore”.
2. The Local Plan proposes removal of Hoylake beach as an “Area of Special Landscape Value” (ASLV). The forum responded to this in April 2021:
<https://hoylakevision.org.uk/removal-of-hoylakes-aslv-status-in-the-local-plan/>We intend to create a policy within the emerging NDP that will address this; with community support, we can ensure this important priority is supported by a clear policy within the NDP and Local Plan, even if it is removed as an ASLV.
3. Objectives, Priorities and Policies contained within the NDP MUST align with other existing legislation including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Plan. To this end, a **Basic Conditions Statement** is a statutory requirement and will be subject to independent examination and review **before the NDP can proceed to referendum.**
4. All consultation responses received are recorded. It is important that the community understand that we cannot collate or analyse commentary on social media. Any responses MUST be communicated directly to Hoylake Vision via email, in person or by post in order to be taken into account. To this end, a **Consultation Statement** is a statutory requirement, which will also include responses to a further statutory six week consultation period run by the Local Authority. This is also subject to independent examination and review **before the NDP can proceed to referendum.**