

Seaton Beach Management Plan (BMP)

Non-Technical Summary – Environmental Baseline

Background

East Devon District Council, working in partnership with the Environment Agency, are developing a Beach Management Plan (BMP) for Seaton, from Seaton Hole in the west to Harbour Wall on the East side of the River Axe and the Axe River up to the Axe Bridge.

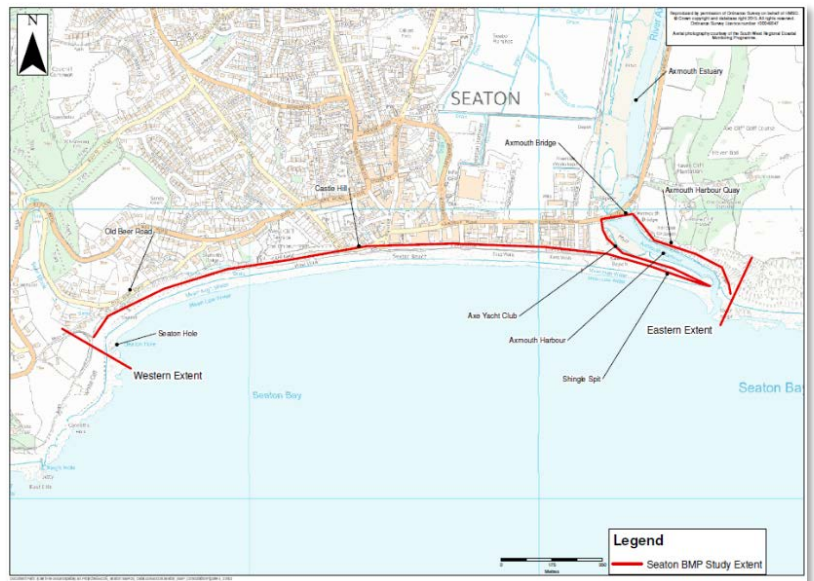
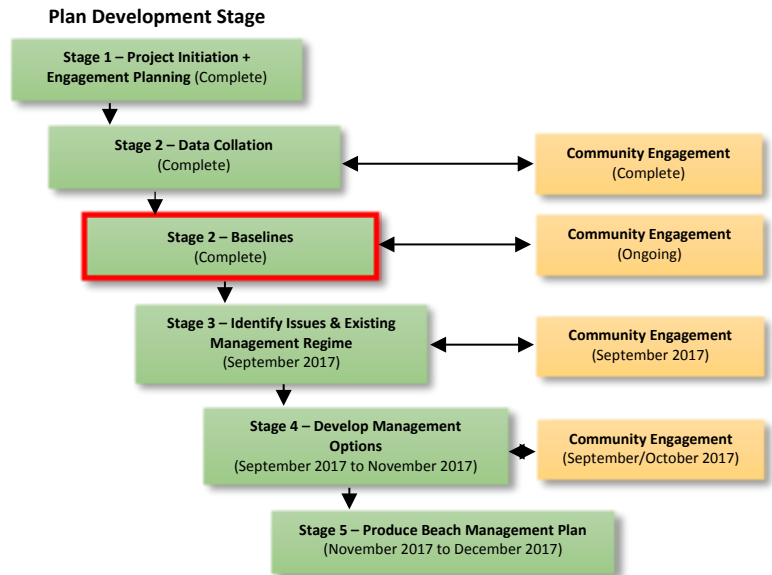
In support of the BMP development, four baseline studies have been completed; this non-technical summary covers the: **Environmental Baseline**.

Purpose of the Environmental Baseline Report

The report provides a review of the key environmental baseline features within the BMP area and identifies some of the preliminary issues and constraints that will require further consideration within the BMP options appraisal.

What the Environmental Baseline Includes

- Physical Setting
- Environmental Setting
 - Designated Nature and Geological Conservation Sites
 - Geomorphology and Coastal Processes
 - Sediment Quality
 - Ecology
 - Fisheries
 - Navigation
 - Landscape setting
 - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
 - Water
 - Land Use
 - Air Quality
 - Noise
- Construction Licensed activities
- Environmental Monitoring
- Other Relevant Documents



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- Licences, Approval and Consents

Preliminary Issues and Constraints Identified for Further Consideration During BMP Option Appraisals: Access, Noise and Visual Disturbance to Recreational Users, Residents and Local Businesses

Seaton is a coastal town and seaside resort with an active harbour area for recreational and commercial fishing vessels. The beach, estuary and harbour areas are important amenity areas, particularly during the peak holiday season, and there are a number of valued community and tourist attractions nearby. There is the B3172 road (Harbour Road) and other local roads, along with access for the coastal path, and access for other watercraft users. Seaton Esplanade is popular with walkers and runners, and hosts a weekly parkrun that attracts around 140 runners per week.

Impact of Beach Management Activities on Internationally, Nationally and Locally Designated Sites

The town is positioned within a highly-valued area for geology, nature, landscape and cultural heritage which is reflected in the number of international, national and locally designated sites present. Nature and geological designations include a World Heritage Site, Special Area of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest that afford protection to the surrounding geology and habitat communities of the surrounding cliffs and coast. An internationally designated Site of Community Interest protects the important ecology of the marine environment, and a Marine Conservation Zone is currently being nationally recommended to protect important habitats and wildlife of the Axe Estuary. An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast are landscape and cultural heritage designations that protect the land, coast and seascape that surrounds Seaton. The town itself is rich in heritage with a Conservation Area, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings with further heritage designations within the surrounding area. Seaton's coastal waters are designated Bathing Waters, and there are also protected waterbodies covering the coast, river, tidal and ground water areas present.

Maintenance Dredging Within Axmouth Harbour and the Disposal of Sediment Within the Shingle Spit at the Eastern End of the Beach at the Estuary Mouth

Since the 1970's there has been regular dredging of Axmouth Harbour and disposal of dredge material within the shingle spit. Any requirement for re-profiling of the spit, and beach management plans for future dredging and disposal works, will need to consider sediment quality (i.e. chemical composition) under new licensing requirements (Environment Agency and Marine Management Organisation) as well as impacts to designated sites.

Key Conclusions

- Early consultation with Natural England during the development of the BMP will be required. There is a potential requirement for a Habitats Regulations Assessment to assess impacts of beach management activities on the integrity of international nature conservation sites. There is also a potential requirement for a Marine Conservation Zone assessment.
- Early consultation with the Jurassic Coast Partnership and the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership will be required.
- Works should be programmed to minimise access, noise and visual disturbance impacts on amenity users, residents and businesses where possible and ensure safe public access.

Recommendations for Further Work

Environmental monitoring requirements will need to be considered following the assessment of beach management options. The Seaton BMP study area and surrounding area are likely to support a number of rare and protected species in addition to those found within the designated sites. Future phases will also require a detailed desk study to identify ecological risks and locate Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats.