

2026



Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project

Strategic Outline Business Case

APRIL 2026

SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL | Town Hall, High Street, Swanage. BH19 2NZ



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Executive Summary

The Swanage Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project addresses a critical and escalating challenge affecting one of the town's most important public assets. The Green Seafront – comprising Sandpit Field, Weather Station Field, the Spa beach hut terraces and Spa Field – forms a defining part of Swanage's coastal frontage and plays a central role in the visitor economy of south-east Dorset, community life and the wellbeing of residents. However, extensive ground instability has resulted in subsidence, drainage failure and structural deterioration across the site. Ongoing ground monitoring demonstrates the scale and urgency of the problem. Without intervention, further ground movement could lead to partial failure, loss of public access, and significant disruption to community events, tourism and the wider economy, as well as the surrounding highway network.

This Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) sets out the rationale for intervention, the options considered, the preferred engineering approach and the proposed route to delivery. It demonstrates that full re-stabilisation is the only viable long-term solution and that the project aligns strongly with local, regional and national policy priorities. The SOBC confirms that the project is deliverable, subject to securing additional funding, and that it will generate substantial economic, social, environmental and operational benefits for Swanage and the wider Dorset area.

Strategic Case

The Green Seafront is a vital community and economic asset. It supports a local visitor economy estimated to be worth over £77 million annually, attracts more than 100,000 event attendees each year, and provides essential green space for recreation, health and social activity. Its location within the Dorset National Landscape and adjoining the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site further enhances its significance. The land will also play a key role in climate resilience, offering adaptable open space as sea levels rise and beach capacity changes.

The Case for Change

Ground instability has been worsening over time, with visible signs of movement across retaining walls, paths, steps and terraces. Several areas have already been closed to the public, including lower beach hut terraces and sections of pathways. Continued deterioration poses risks to public safety, restricts accessibility and undermines the site's ability to function as a high-quality public amenity and event venue. In the worst case, further movement could compromise the surrounding highway network and lead to significant reputational damage for the town.

The site supports ten major events and festivals across the year. Any substantial closure of the Green Seafront would reduce Swanage's capacity to host these events, diminish the visitor experience and weaken the town's position as a traditional seaside

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destination. The project is therefore driven by a combination of safety, asset protection, community benefit, economic resilience and long-term sustainability.

Strategic Alignment

The project aligns closely with Swanage Town Council's Corporate Plan 2026–2030, supporting priorities relating to regenerative tourism, community wellbeing, climate action, heritage protection and sustainable public realm investment. It also supports Dorset Council's strategic objectives for resilient communities, economic vitality and climate and ecological response.

The project is consistent with local planning policy, coastal management frameworks and national requirements including biodiversity net gain and climate adaptation. It integrates with wider local infrastructure programmes such as Shore Road improvements, beach recharge works and future coastal protection schemes.

Economic Case

The Green Seafront underpins the local visitor economy, which supports more than 1,000 local jobs. Maintaining and enhancing this asset is therefore essential to sustaining Swanage's economic vitality. The project will:

- Protect and enhance the town's visitor offer.
- Strengthen the events environment, supporting year-round activity and spending.
- Improve the quality and reliability of public space, encouraging longer stays and repeat visits.
- Support local businesses through increased footfall and improved public realm.

A 1% increase in visitor spending would generate approximately £770,000 per year for the local economy.

Options Considered

Four strategic options were assessed:

- **Do nothing** – rejected due to unacceptable safety, economic and reputational risks.
- **Asset disposal** – not feasible due to charitable land constraints and limited market viability.
- **Do minimum** – insufficient to address underlying instability or meet project objectives.
- **Full re-stabilisation** – the only option that delivers long-term safety, functionality and value.

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Soil nailing is identified as the preferred engineering method due to its 100-year design life, ability to retain the site's character and manageable construction impacts.

Two deliverable scheme options have been developed, informed by two rounds of public engagement:

- **New Option (v2)** – c. £6.9m combining stabilisation with significantly enhanced accessibility, improved public realm, upgraded community facilities, increased biodiverse plantings and improved event and beach hut provision.
- **Essential Option (v3)** – c. £4.75m, focused on core stabilisation, retaining the land in its current form.

The wide range of economic, community and environmental benefits make the New Option the preferred option.

A range of different funding options have been considered. Borrowing and asset disposal are ruled out as unsustainable at the current time. The use of reserves, grant funding and post implementation revenue are to be taken forward.

Social, Environmental and Operational Benefits

The project will deliver enhanced opportunities for recreation and wellbeing, and a safer, more inclusive public environment. A key driver for the New Option is improved accessibility, ensuring that footpaths and new public conveniences are available to all residents and visitors.

Environmental benefits include at least 10% biodiversity net gain, sustainable planting, improved green infrastructure and strengthened climate resilience. This will in part be delivered by the filling in of Walrond Road. Stabilisation will also significantly reduce long-term maintenance liabilities and remove the need for ongoing monitoring.

Commercial Case

The Commercial Case confirms that the project is deliverable and that there is a capable regional market with relevant experience in coastal and geotechnical stabilisation.

A 'design and build' procurement model is emerging as the preferred approach, offering integrated design and construction responsibility and more effective management of geotechnical risk. Early professional services are being secured through Dorset Council procurement frameworks. The commercial strategy will be refined at Outline Business Case stage following market engagement and further design development.

Financial Case

As of February 2026, confirmed funding totals £4.40 million, comprising Town Council reserves and a contribution from Dorset Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.

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The January 2026 cost estimates are:

- **New Option** – c. £6.9m cost, £2.5m funding gap
- **Essential Option** – c. £4.75m cost, £350k funding gap

The New Option requires additional grant funding or external investment.

Beach huts remain the primary income source. The New Option introduces additional revenue potential through kiosk space, small event facilities and improved beach hut provision. However, the scheme is not self-financing and it is projected that any increase in income to the Town Council will not fully mitigate the loss of investment income resulting from the use of reserves to fund the project.

The Council's priority is therefore to secure external funding to enable delivery of the preferred New Option, while progressing both options through planning and OBC development.

Management Case

The project will be delivered through established governance, risk management and programme controls. Oversight is provided by Swanage Town Council, supported by the Seafront Masterplan Working Party.

Key programme milestones include:

- Planning submission – Summer 2026
- Outline Business Case – Post-planning
- Full Business Case – Following tender returns
- Construction start – September 2027
- Construction duration – Approximately 35 weeks

Major risks include funding uncertainty, cost inflation, planning timescales, extreme weather and unknown ground conditions. Mitigation measures include early contractor involvement, detailed surveys, structured risk management and formal assurance at OBC and FBC stages.

Conclusion

The SOBC demonstrates that intervention is essential to secure the long-term future of the Green Seafront. Full re-stabilisation is the only viable strategic approach. The recommended way forward is to progress both options through planning and OBC development. The priority is to secure the £2.5m additional funding required to implement the preferred New Option as this will deliver the widest range of economic, community and environmental benefits to Swanage and the surrounding area.

Introduction to the Business Case

The Green Seafront

Swanage's Green Seafront is at the core of our community, hosting numerous events throughout the year and making a significant contribution to the local economy. However, it is at risk of sudden and potentially catastrophic movement due to ground instability.

This business case documents the process, considerations and decision-making Swanage Town Council has undertaken to develop a project to re-stabilise the Green Seafront. Ensuring that the area can be used for future generations of residents and visitors to this beautiful Dorset seaside town.

Location and Context

Swanage Green Seafront, covering around 1.8 hectares, forms a key part of the town's coastal frontage, lying within the protected Dorset National Landscape (formerly AONB) and in close proximity to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. Stretching for approximately 280 metres along the northern section of Swanage Bay, this publicly accessible area offers community green space and is complemented by infrastructure to support events and beach huts which add to the attraction of Swanage as a visitor destination.

The Green Seafront land is managed by Swanage Town Council, as is the Blue Flag award-winning main beach. However, responsibility for Swanage Seafront is shared with Dorset Council, which maintains the highways, pavements and streetlights, undertakes street cleansing, and holds statutory responsibility for coastal defence and flood prevention measures.

Swanage Green Seafront serves as an important visual and physical link between the beach, town centre, and surrounding coastal landscape. It is a vibrant focal point for both residents and visitors, offering an attractive, multifunctional space that accommodates everyday leisure activities as well as large-scale community events. Together, these qualities help define the distinctive character of this traditional seaside resort.

The Green Seafront is made up of four distinct areas, bisected by Walrond Road:

- **Sandpit Field:** Large and level grassed field surrounded by trees and planting which is used as the event hosting space.
- **Weather Station Field:** Smaller field with level area not currently used for events. Separated from Sandpit field by Walrond Road. Trees along western edge with limited planting. Met Office weather station present in southwest of field – one of the oldest continuously monitored station locations in UK.

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- **Spa Beach Huts:** Terraced area adjacent to Weather Station Field. This area previously had some 35 beach huts present. However, this number is currently reduced to 14 useable beach huts as the lower terraces are closed off due to ground instability risks.
- **Spa Field:** A small level area which is relatively underutilised. Eastern area is covered with dense vegetation with stepped pathways down to Shore Road. Sections of pathways closed to public due to ground instability.



The four areas comprising the Green Seafront

The Business Case

This document sets out the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation Project, prepared in accordance with HM Treasury's Five Case Model. It provides a structured, evidence-based assessment of the proposal across five dimensions:

- **The Strategic Case**, establishing the rationale for investment and its alignment with policy objectives.
- **The Economic Case**, evaluating value for money and expected benefits.
- **The Commercial Case**, identifying delivery and procurement routes.
- **The Financial Case**, confirming affordability and funding sources.
- **The Management Case**, setting out governance, delivery, and risk management arrangements.

Together, these cases provide the foundation for informed decision-making, ensuring that investment in the Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation Project is justified, affordable, and deliverable, and that it secures lasting economic, social, and environmental value.

The SOBC represents the first stage in a three-phase business case process for the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. Following the successful granting of planning permission and market engagement, an Outline Business Case (OBC) will be developed to support the procurement of a design-and-build contract. A Final Business Case (FBC) will then be prepared upon receipt of tender submissions. Its approval will enable the award of the contract. This three-stage approach ensures that the business case evolves in step with the project, with each stage incorporating progressively more detailed and robust information as it becomes available.

1. The Strategic Case

1.1 Strategic Case Summary

The Strategic Case for the Swanage Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project sets out a clear and compelling rationale for intervention, demonstrating the importance of the site to both the local economy and community wellbeing, alongside the urgent need to address its deteriorating condition.

The Green Seafront is a critical asset for Swanage, underpinning a visitor economy worth approximately £77 million annually and supporting a significant number of local jobs. It provides a key location for major events, attracts over 100,000 visitors each year, and serves as a vital public open space for recreation, health, and social interaction. The site has long played a central role in the identity and vitality of the town. However, increasing ground instability, including subsidence, cracking, and drainage failure, has resulted in growing risks to public safety, restricted access, and reduced functionality. Without intervention, these issues are expected to worsen, threatening tourism, community use, and the wider reputation of Swanage.

The case for change is therefore driven by the need to secure the long-term future of the site, ensuring it remains safe, accessible, and economically productive. The project aligns strongly with Swanage Town Council's Corporate Plan and wider strategic priorities, including sustainable tourism, climate resilience, community wellbeing, and protection of the natural and historic environment. It is also consistent with regional and national policy frameworks, including local planning policy, coastal management strategies, and environmental objectives such as biodiversity net gain and climate adaptation.

The Strategic Case defines a clear set of spending objectives focused on maintaining and improving the quality of the seafront, supporting the local economy, enhancing service provision, reducing long-term maintenance costs, and ensuring compliance with statutory and safety requirements. These objectives reflect both the current challenges and the long-term ambitions for the site. Existing arrangements highlight limitations in the current management approach, including ongoing monitoring requirements, constrained infrastructure, limited accessibility, and declining assets such as beach huts and pathways.

To address these issues, the project scope has been developed around a combination of essential and desirable interventions. Core requirements include stabilising the ground, maintaining event provision, improving accessibility, reducing maintenance liabilities, and delivering environmental enhancements. Additional opportunities include expanding event space, increasing beach hut provision, improving utilities, and supporting year-round use. The anticipated benefits are wide-ranging, including

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enhanced visitor experience, increased tourism and local spending, improved accessibility, reduced anti-social behaviour, and lower long-term maintenance costs.

The Strategic Case also recognises a range of risks, constraints, and dependencies that will influence delivery. Key risks include funding uncertainty, cost inflation, complex land ownership arrangements, and challenging ground conditions. Constraints such as seasonal tourism, construction impacts, planning requirements, and coordination with other local projects must also be managed. Successful delivery will depend on securing funding, obtaining necessary approvals, and coordinating closely with related infrastructure and coastal defence schemes.

Overall, the Strategic Case demonstrates that intervention is both necessary and justified. It confirms that the project is strategically aligned, addresses a clearly evidenced need, and will deliver significant economic, social, and environmental benefits, ensuring the long-term future of the Green Seafront.

1.2 Strategic Context

1.2.1 Organisational Overview

Swanage Town Council (the 'Council') is the first tier of local government for the town of Swanage, Dorset. The Council owns all the land included in the Green Seafront project, although it holds two of the parcels of land under charitable trusts: Sandpit Field (Mowlem Land Trust) and Weather Station Field (Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust). The Town Council is the sole corporate trustee of these Trusts and must abide by charity law in respect of managing this property, The Spa beach huts and land adjoining to the north is owned outright by the Council.

The Council's mission is to maintain and enhance Swanage for the wellbeing and prosperity of present and future generations. This mission is embedded in the Council's Corporate Plan, which outlines ambitions around the local economy, climate action, community wellbeing, preservation of Swanage's heritage and sustainable tourism.

The Council is governed by 12 councillors, six having been elected to represent the North Ward and six the South Ward. The Councillors provide strategic direction and make decisions on behalf of residents. It operates within a two-tier governance structure, working in partnership with Dorset Council.

The Council delivers a wide range of local services including beach and seafront management, car parks, tourism services, parks and open spaces, public toilets, cemeteries, and event coordination.

Dorset Council is the principal authority for Swanage representing the second tier of local governance within the area. Dorset Council covers a very wide range of responsibilities including education, on-street parking, waste management, social care, and highways.

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Dorset Council is represented locally by two Councillors, both of whom also sit on Swanage Town Council.

Key customers of the Town Council's services include residents and local businesses along with hundreds of thousands of annual visitors. There are 4,513 households in the area administered by Swanage Town Council with 9,411 residents (Dorset Council, 2026).

Visitor data for 2023 suggests that Swanage received around 123,000 staying trips with 549,000 overnight stays and 807,000 day visits. It is estimated that these 2023 visitors led to a local economy benefit of over £77m while visiting Swanage (The South West Research Company, 2025).

The Town Council's annual turnover is approximately £2.9 million, with £1.1m being funded from the precept. Other income is generated through a wide number of sources including car parking charges, investment income and fees and charges (e.g. from beach hut hire).

The Council operates through a relatively small staff structure, with governance overseen by the Town Clerk and four departmental leads. Governance and delivery of the Swanage Green Seafront project will be managed by Full Council with regular oversight from the Seafront Masterplan Working Party. Please see the Management Case for more details.

From a financial standpoint, the Council has a stable fiscal position and strong capital reserves (see more detail in the Financial Case). It is however reliant on securing external funding and grant support to deliver large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Swanage Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project.



Map of Swanage Town Council Area (Civil Parish)

1.2.2 Alignment with Strategies and Policies – Local, Regional and National

As explained in section 2.4.6. below, the Town Council has devised two options for the Green Seafront proposals which vary significantly in the benefits that are delivered. In reading the following paragraphs it should be noted that the New Option is more closely aligned with a majority of these policies than the Essential Option.

Local: Swanage Town Council Corporate Plan 2023-2025 and 2026-2030

The Green Seafront Scheme is The Green Seafront Scheme is a major project that is aligned with the following priorities, set out in the Town Council’s Corporate Plan 2026-2030:

- Promoting Regenerative Tourism and Supporting the Local Economy
- Encouraging Health and Wellbeing and Enhancing Community Safety
- Planning for the Future and Preserving our Heritage
- Protecting the Natural Environment and Addressing the Climate Crisis

The Green Seafront Scheme delivers against these priorities in the following ways:

1. Promoting Regenerative Tourism and Supporting the Local Economy

- Delivers investment identified within the Seafront Masterplan, directly supporting the Council’s stated intention to “invest in the Green Seafront” between 2026 and 2030.
- Enhances the quality of Swanage as a visitor destination through improved public realm.
- Provides flexible, high-quality space for events and cultural activity, supporting local businesses and the visitor economy year-round.
- Improves accessibility along the seafront, encouraging longer stays and increased visitor spend.

2. Encouraging Health and Wellbeing and Enhancing Community Safety

- Creates inclusive, accessible public spaces that support walking, informal recreation and social interaction for residents and visitors of all ages.
- Improves accessibility along the seafront in line with the Council’s commitment to removing barriers and implementing recommendations from its accessibility audit.

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- Supports mental wellbeing by improving access to high-quality coastal environments and green/blue spaces.

3. Planning for the Future and Preserving our Heritage

- Respects and enhances Swanage's historic seafront setting, reinforcing the town's unique identity and sense of place.
- Delivers long-term improvements to seafront infrastructure, supporting resilience and future-proofing against coastal pressures such as those arising from climate change.
- Aligns with the Council's partnership working with Dorset Council and the Environment Agency on public realm and sea defence improvements.

4. Protecting the Natural Environment and Addressing the Climate Crisis

- Embeds sustainability into the design of a major capital project, reflecting the Council's requirement that new construction incorporates climate and environmental considerations.
- Supports the objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy by improving the relationship between the built environment and the natural coastal setting.

Local: Swanage Local Plan to 2027 (Adopted 2017)

The Swanage Local Plan sets out a vision for sustainable growth in Swanage to 2027, proposing to deliver around 200 new homes including 50% affordable through settlement extensions, townscape protection, and enhancement of green infrastructure.

It supports regeneration of the town centre with new retail space, improved public realm, and potential for a new health centre and transport interchange. The plan seeks to safeguard community services, protect natural and historic environments, reduce flood risk, improve walking/cycling links, and strengthen the local economy. Developed through extensive community engagement, it complements the Purbeck Local Plan. The Green Seafront ground stabilisation project is in conformity with the Swanage Local Plan as it:

- Enhances and protects the seafront's green spaces, supporting the Swanage Plan requirement to safeguard and improve open space and recreation areas.
- Contributes to the Green Infrastructure Strategy by improving green corridors, biodiversity, and public planting schemes.
- Supports adaptation to climate change and flood resilience by aligning with coastal management and sea defence objectives identified for the seafront.

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- Improves public realm quality in a key character area, reinforcing townscape protection policies that require enhancement of valued seafront environments.
- Encourages sustainable travel by integrating with planned walking and cycling improvements along Shore Road and the wider network.
- Strengthens Swanage's visitor appeal and economic vitality by enhancing a primary tourism asset, supporting policies for a vibrant town centre and prosperous economy.
- Supports community wellbeing by improving access to recreation, aligning with policies safeguarding community facilities and promoting healthier environments.

Local: Swanage Neighbourhood Plan (Initial Consultation 2025)

The draft Neighbourhood Plan, which will be published for Regulation 14 consultation in 2026, contains 'Policy SWAN8: The Green Seafront Stabilisation and Enhancement Scheme' which explicitly supports development proposals to stabilise and enhance Sandpit Field and neighbouring seafront spaces, subject to a series of criteria relating to safety, design quality, accessibility, biodiversity, and heritage conservation.

The draft policy states development proposals will be supported to protect it as an important public open space, provided they:

- Improve ground stability
- Remove and infill the section of Walrond Road east of De Moulham Road in order to create a larger, continuous area of public open space
- Result in no net loss to the overall area of greenspace and achieve a net gain in biodiversity
- Use high-quality design to improve the appearance of the area, in keeping with the Dorset National Landscape and the setting of the Swanage Conservation Area
- Improve site accessibility by creating step-free accesses where feasible; and
- Conserve and enhance heritage assets.

Paragraphs 3.28–3.30 of the draft Neighbourhood Plan explain how the draft policy supports the protection and enhancement of key seafront public open spaces, particularly Sandpit Field, and how this approach aligns with higher-level planning policy. Paragraph 3.28 sets out the policy context, confirming that proposals are consistent with National Decision-Making Policy F9 (managing development in Coastal Change Management Areas), Purbeck Local Plan Part 2 Policy E6 (coastal change management), and PLP2 Policies I4 and EE4 (safeguarding community facilities and supporting tourism).

Paragraph 3.29 describes the purpose and importance of the Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation and Enhancement Scheme, identifying the specific sites it covers (Sandpit

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Field, Weather Station Field, and the Spa beach hut area). It explains the consequences of inaction, including increasing safety risks, higher future repair costs, and the potential loss of valued spaces used for recreation, events, and tourism (Policy F9; PLP2 I4; PLP2 EE4).

Paragraph 3.30 summarises the key elements of the scheme, including land stabilisation, protection of public access, and environmental and community enhancements. It highlights measures such as improved accessibility, biodiversity enhancements, preservation of boundary walls, refurbishment of beach huts, and new interpretative signage, demonstrating that the policy supports maintenance and improvement of existing assets rather than new seafront development (PLP2 E6; PLP2 I4).

Local: Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy (Adopted 2018)

The Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out a plan to enhance and expand the town's network of green spaces to improve biodiversity, climate resilience, flood management, visual quality, and community wellbeing.

Developed through workshops, audits, and public consultation, it identifies existing assets, gaps, and priority areas for improvement, proposing targeted projects such as tree planting, SUDS features, new green corridors, woodland creation, and park enhancements.

The strategy supports local planning policy, guides developers, and outlines funding opportunities and delivery mechanisms, aiming to create an interconnected, multifunctional green network that strengthens Swanage's environment, economy, and quality of life.

The Green Seafront project directly supports the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy by enhancing public open space, improving climate resilience, and increasing biodiversity. This is achieved by new planting along with upgrading access and connectivity along the seafront, all of which are core aims identified as priorities for strengthening Swanage's Green Infrastructure network.

Local: Swanage Seafront Masterplan (Published 2023)

The Swanage Seafront Masterplan provides a long-term strategic vision for improving the seafront from Swanage Pier to Ocean Bay. The masterplan aims to enhance accessibility, environmental quality, heritage, events infrastructure, and the visitor experience. It is based on extensive public engagement identifying issues such as narrow walkways, limited accessibility, dated infrastructure, and the need for improved seating, shelter, biodiversity, and connectivity across zones. The plan sets out opportunities for cohesive design, better pedestrian environments, and revitalised public spaces.

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The Green Seafront project directly addresses key Masterplan priorities by stabilising Sandpit Field, Weather Station Field, and the Spa beach hut area, enabling safer access, renewed public spaces and upgraded facilities. It also responds to Masterplan themes on biodiversity, accessibility, and event infrastructure.

Local: Swanage Town Council Environmental Policy & Action Plan (2019 & 2024)

Swanage Town Council's Environment Policy and Action Plan commit to addressing the climate crisis by embedding sustainability across council operations, buildings, natural spaces, infrastructure, and tourism. The policy sets six aims, while the Action Plan outlines practical measures such as renewable energy adoption, biodiversity improvements, waste reduction, sustainable construction, tree planting, community engagement, and promotion of sustainable travel and tourism.

The Green Seafront Project supports these aims by improving natural habitats, encouraging walking (active travel) through new accessible paths and supporting sustainable tourism. The design will also upgrade site infrastructure using low carbon construction techniques and include climate resilient features to help protect Swanage's coastal environment.

Regional: Purbeck Local Plan 2018 – 2034 (Adopted 2024)

The Purbeck Local Plan sets out the planning framework for how Purbeck will grow and change to 2034, ensuring development is sustainable, protects the area's unique environment, supports the economy, improves infrastructure, strengthens resilience to climate change, and enhances quality of life for communities. It guides decisions on all planning applications and ensures coordinated delivery of homes, employment, infrastructure, and environmental protections across Purbeck, including Swanage.

Key Purbeck Local Plan policies support the Green Seafront project through climate resilience, landscape protection, and enhanced public realm.

- Policies **E1** and **E12** require high quality-design that conserves Swanage's distinctive coastal landscape, which the project delivers through improved planting and upgraded public spaces.
- Policies **E4–E6** emphasise flood mitigation, SuDS and managing coastal change. The seafront stabilisation directly meets these requirements.
- Biodiversity policies **E7–E10** encourage habitat enhancement which are supported by the project's native planting and ecological improvements.
- Infrastructure policies **I2–I3** promote walking, cycling and better green infrastructure. All are advanced by improved access routes and strengthened coastal greenspace in this project. It is envisaged that the emerging Dorset Local Plan will contain similar policies on many of these matters, and that therefore the

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Green Seafront Scheme will remain strongly aligned to Dorset Council's planning policy documents.

Regional: Dorset Council Plan 2024-2029 (Adopted 2024)

The Dorset Council Plan 2024-2029 sets a vision for a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable Dorset, addressing key challenges including the climate and nature emergency, economic growth, health inequalities and community resilience.

The Plan is structured around four overarching priorities, including:

- Grow our economy
- Responding to the climate and nature crisis

These priorities are supported by partnership working, prevention and long-term planning, and guide decision-making across Dorset over the five-year period.

The Green Seafront Project aligns with the Dorset Council Plan by:

- Supporting economic growth, particularly through year-round tourism, by enhancing a key coastal asset that contributes to the visitor economy
- Responding to the climate and nature crisis by strengthening climate adaptation and resilience along the coast
- Improving access and inclusivity within a publicly accessible coastal space
- Creating high-quality public space that supports healthier and more resilient communities

The project also aligns with related county-level strategic objectives, including Dorset's Economic Growth Strategy, specifically its ambition to be ambitious for tourism, through continued investment in high-quality visitor environments.

Overall, the Green Seafront Project supports the Dorset Council Plan's emphasis on sustainability, climate adaptation, stronger local economies and partnership-led delivery, and demonstrates clear alignment with county-wide priorities for the plan period.

Regional: Dorset Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (Published 2021)

The Dorset Council Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy sets out Dorset Council's response to the climate and ecological emergencies declared in 2019. It aims for a carbon-neutral Council by 2040 and a carbon-neutral Dorset by 2050. It outlines actions

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across energy, buildings, transport, waste, water, natural assets, food systems, and the economy.

The strategy highlights the scale of climate and ecological risks, the need for rapid emissions reductions and the importance of protecting biodiversity. It emphasises partnership working, community engagement, behaviour change and long-term investment. The document is a living framework, supported by detailed, regularly updated action plans

The Green Seafront Project aligns strongly with the Dorset Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy by enhancing climate resilience, protecting natural assets, improving biodiversity, and supporting low carbon travel. Its focus on sustainable design, adaptation to coastal change, accessible green space and ecological enhancement directly reflects the strategy's priorities for nature recovery, resilience, and reduced emissions.

Regional: Shoreline Management Plan 15 (Adopted 2011 and revised 2025)

The Shoreline Management Plan Policy Development Zone 4 (PDZ4) sets long-term coastal policies from Handfast Point to Durlston Head. It identifies Swanage Bay as strategically important for protecting the town's economic viability, heritage, infrastructure, beach use, and community assets. The preferred plan is to Hold the Line along the main Swanage frontage, maintaining defences, managing overtopping, sustaining the groyne field, and periodically renourishing the beach. This policy ensures that investment in the Green Seafront Scheme will be protected from coastal erosion throughout its intended lifespan.

National: National Planning Policy Framework (Adopted 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the UK Government's planning policies for England and how they must be applied. It establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires plans and decisions to address economic, social, and environmental objectives together.

Policies promote well-designed places, protect the natural and historic environment, strengthen climate-change resilience, and manage flood and coastal risks. The NPPF requires high-quality public realm, accessible green infrastructure, healthy communities, and alignment with marine and coastal planning. Local decisions must be consistent with these national policy expectations, which from 2024 includes a requirement for a 10% biodiversity net gain on all works.

The Green Seafront Project aligns with NPPF priorities by enhancing well -designed public space, delivering green infrastructure, supporting health, accessibility and community wellbeing and strengthening resilience to coastal change and flood risk.

1.2.3 Other Relevant Strategies and Projects

The Swanage Green Seafront Project is a core component of a wider programme of local regeneration, environmental resilience, and coastal infrastructure investment. It forms part of an integrated seafront redevelopment and aligns directly with several complementary strategies and delivery projects currently in progress across the town:

- **Shore Road Highway Improvements:** The Shore Road project focuses on improving pedestrian safety and accessibility while improving the public realm. Delivered by Dorset Council this project is independent from the Green Seafront. However, it is interdependent with this project. Construction is planned to be undertaken at the same time, and the design of both schemes must align to ensure accessibility between the beach and Green Seafront is maximised, creating a unified seafront experience.
- **Beach Recharge Scheme:** The focus of this scheme is to restore optimum beach sediment levels in accordance with Dorset Council's Swanage Beach Management Plan (Adopted 2020) – this is known as a beach recharge or beach nourishment. Sand will be placed on the beach to create a higher and wider beach along with a groyne adjacent to the Mowlem Slipway. This will absorb more wave energy and protect the land behind. Currently anticipated to be undertaken at a similar time to the Green Seafront and Shore Road projects, integration with this project is essential to ensure efficient delivery. Work is currently being considered for the January to March 2028 period.
- **Swanage Town Coastal Protection Scheme:** This project aims to provide a permanent flood defence scheme from the Mowlem Theatre to the Pier, encompassing the Square, the Parade and the Lower High Street. This central location currently relies on emergency temporary demountable flood defences which are deployed in the winter by the Environment Agency to protect from high tides and storms. This project involves works in a similar area to the Green Seafront project, meaning that close working and delivery integration is critical to ensure success. Currently the works are assumed to take place at some time in 2028 or 2029, although this has not been confirmed and there remains potential that works might run concurrently with the Green Seafront works.
- **Wessex Water Infrastructure Works:** Wessex Water is undertaking significant infrastructure improvements in Swanage as part of a wider £1.4 billion investment across the region to improve water quality and reduce the use of storm overflows. There is a wastewater treatment facility on Peveril Point with storm sewers across the town. Close working with Wessex Water is required to ensure that access and

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operations are maintained for operations and project delivery. Key works are currently considered to impact on the Main Beach Car Park and King George's Field areas of Swanage between February 2028 to February 2029.

- **Community infrastructure projects:** Improvements are also being planned to a range of community facilities over a similar timeframe. These include a significant upgrade of leisure amenities at Day's Park to provide a full-sized 3G football pitch and a multi-use sports hall. This is a priority for the local community, and the Town Council is committed to making a significant financial contribution to the delivery of these proposals. The Town Council will also be a key partner in the following projects: provision of community-owned social housing by the Swanage Community Land Trust; enhanced health and wellbeing facilities at the Focus Centre and Herston Village Hall; improvements to the Mowlem Theatre and Swanage Museum.

Links to other programmes will ensure integration and cost-efficiency, with shared design principles, community engagement processes, and potential for joint funding opportunities. The project is designed to complement, not duplicate, other investments and will add value through environmental, economic, and social benefits. In addition, an awareness of other projects in advance of the start of any works should lead to plans to help mitigate the worst impacts of disruption on the town and the local economy.

1.2.4 The case for change

The Swanage Green Seafront is fundamental to the town's visitor economy and to the quality of life enjoyed by residents. Tourism remains Swanage's dominant economic sector, generating an estimated £77million in annual visitor spending and supporting nearly 1,000 local jobs across hospitality, retail, and leisure (2023 South West Research Company).

Swanage Town Council undertook a first phase of ground stabilisation in 2013 to 2015. This secured the open space to the south of the land included in the Green Seafront Scheme, known as the Recreation Ground, and provided improved infrastructure for both residents and visitors alike, including new accessible public conveniences, new beach huts and a refreshment kiosk. The Town Council funded the £2.5m investment from an earlier asset disposal without any grant funding or borrowing. These improvements have helped to secure Swanage's reputation as a high-quality tourism destination and support the case for change in respect of the Green Seafront Scheme. The Green Seafront provides the venue for around ten major annual events, including the Swanage Carnival, Pirate Festival, and Jazz Festival. The area also hosts multiple smaller events throughout the year, adding further year-round vibrancy to the town. The events held on the Green Seafront attract over 100,000 visitors each year, playing a crucial role in sustaining the vitality of the local economy.

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Beyond its economic significance, the Green Seafront offers an essential public open space used daily for relaxation, walking, recreation, and social interaction. It contributes significantly to public health, wellbeing, and community identity. Since the 1920s, the seafront land has served as both a key economic asset and a cherished public amenity.

Despite its importance, the area and its associated infrastructure are exhibiting clear signs of ground instability and structural deterioration. Movement, subsidence, and cracking have been recorded across multiple sections, confirmed through both visual inspections and borehole monitoring, reflecting the site's complex geology and the cumulative effects of long-term coastal pressures. Existing drainage deficiencies, combined with increasingly intense rainfall, are likely to accelerate erosion and further destabilise the ground conditions.

The continued degradation of the site now poses risks to public safety, restricts accessibility, and compromises the area's ability to function as a community space and visitor destination. Without timely intervention, these issues will continue to worsen, placing local events, tourism income, public amenity, and the town's wider reputation at growing risk.

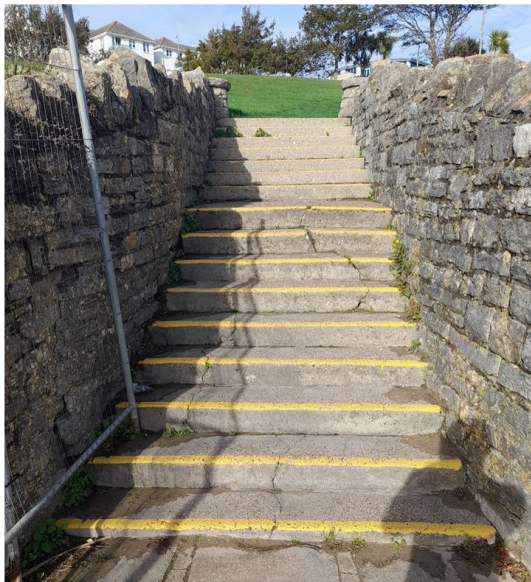
Since 2023 Swanage Town Council has commissioned WSP Ltd. to undertake regular geotechnical monitoring and risk assessments of the Green Seafront.

WSP Ltd are described as '*one of the world's leading professional services firms, uniting engineering, advisory and science-based expertise to make a positive impact*' [WSP | Global engineering and professional services firm | WSP](#)

The February 2026 monitoring report identified 56 defects. These defects typically relate to:

- Retaining walls with vertical and/or horizontal cracking, bulging, or bowing, excessive settlement or leaning.
- Hummocky areas where surface distress was identified in grassed areas and footways.
- Tension cracking forming in steep vegetated slopes.
- Footway and stairway distress in the form of tension cracking, structural cracking, pavement settlement, and heave.
- Dilapidated surface drainage and retaining wall weepholes, blocked or semi-blocked by debris and siltation.

The images below provide examples of the defects being monitored. The most recent full monitoring report (February 2026 – most recent at time of writing) is available here [Site Monitoring Report February 2026.pdf](#). More technical information can be found on the Town Council website: www.swanage.gov.uk/green-seafront-scheme.



Images showing defects in the walls, steps and pavement

1.3 Spending Objectives, Existing Arrangements and Business Needs

1.3.1 Spending Objectives

This section specifies the spending objectives for the project that focus on the outcomes we are seeking to achieve. These objectives align with Swanage Town Council's policies and strategies and have been developed and ratified by Town Councillors.

1.	Maintain & Improve Quality of the Green Seafront
a.	Ensure the Green Seafront is available for public use for at least the next 100 years.
b.	Maintain low levels of antisocial behaviour through better use of space and increased community presence. The space should be welcoming and a safe space for all.
c.	Improve biodiversity and achieve a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain through habitat creation and sustainable planting.
d.	Improve accessibility across the site.
e.	Enhance the ambience of the site through improvements to its character and atmosphere.
f.	Maintain a location for the Weather Station.
2.	Support Swanage's Economy
a.	Ensure the Swanage Green Seafront continues to enhance Swanage's local economy through the provision of a first-class event space and green space linked to the town.
b.	Mitigate potential future beach loss due to sea level rise by developing adjacent, usable green space that supports recreational use and climate resilience.
c.	Increase and improve the amount of usable event space to allow for a broader calendar of year-round community and tourism-focused events.
d.	Enable year-round use of the space, supporting winter beach hut bookings and seasonal event programming.
e.	Create appropriate new commercial/revenue generating opportunities to enhance vibrancy and to provide the Council with income to reinvest in the town, partially offsetting loss of investment income as a result of capital spending.

f.	Increase accessibility to the site to ensure that ‘access for all’ will enhance visitor numbers to the town.
3.	Improve Delivery of Services on the Green Seafront
a.	Retain and enhance the event space (including power sources and access to water).
b.	Enhance accessibility to the site, ensuring inclusive design for people of all abilities.
c.	Expand the number of beach huts at the Spa, with a specific increase in accessible units.
d.	Introduce new, fully accessible toilet facilities.
e.	Retain the Weather Station as a vital asset for public information and scientific monitoring.
f.	Improve the event space to allow for all-year use.
g.	Enhance the area for residents’ and visitors’ health and wellbeing.
4.	Reduce Cost of Providing Services on the Green Seafront
a.	Eliminate the need for frequent monitoring by replacing failing infrastructure with durable, low-maintenance solutions.
b.	Reduce or remove the requirement for ad-hoc repairs and reactive maintenance through quality design and materials.
c.	Reduce the impact of potential maintenance of adjoining assets, i.e. highways and property.
d.	Ensure plantings are low maintenance.
5.	Ensure Statutory & Regulatory Compliance
a.	Ensure safe public use of the seafront through repair or replacement of deteriorating infrastructure.
b.	Remove risk of land slippage to enable future generations to enjoy free unfettered access to the site.
c.	Ensure requirements around health and safety are met.
d.	Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

1.3.2 Existing Arrangements

The site is fully managed by the Council, which oversees day-to-day operations and routine maintenance along with all capital and one-off works. Third-party use such as events, festivals, and community activities are controlled through the Council's Event Management Procedure, ensuring that organisers obtain formal permission and comply with safety, operational and environmental requirements.

While the Council charges for certain commercial events, no chargeable events have taken place on Sandpit Field in recent years.

Sandpit Field attracts a significant number of visitors annually – estimated to be in excess of 100,000. The site experiences its highest usage between end May and early September, with events often running on consecutive weekends. This high intensity of use limits opportunities for natural ground recovery and increases wear on infrastructure.

The current programme typically includes:

- Large community events and major festivals for 2026:
 - Swanage Pirate Festival - May
 - Swanage Fish and Food Festival - June
 - Swanage Sea Rowing Regatta - June
 - Swanage Triathlon - June
 - Swanage Jazz Festival - July
 - Swanage Carnival - July
 - Rotary Summer Fete - August
 - Swanage Folk Festival - September
 - The Purbeck Marathon - September
- Fitness sessions and seasonal gatherings.
- Activities utilising adjacent areas, including the Spa beach huts.

Several operational constraints and requirements shape the way the site is currently managed:

- The local economy is heavily dependent on tourism and experiences pronounced seasonal peaks.
- Ongoing ground monitoring is required to assess land movement and associated safety risks, generating continued management costs.
- A quarterly risk report identifies hazards and necessary mitigations for public safety.
- High-risk areas remain restricted using temporary barriers where ground conditions are unstable.

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- The Spa area contains 14 usable beach huts, eight of which will require replacement by 2027 due to age-related deterioration.
- Part of the Spa beach hut terrace has been closed since 2018 due to slippage risk, resulting in visual blight and a lost income stream.
- The historic seafront weather station must remain in situ, although its footprint can be reduced within future plans.
- The nearest public toilets (Battlegate) are limited, and site constraints prevent installation of accessible facilities at that location.
- Existing pathways provide poor connectivity between Shore Road, Sandpit Field, and adjoining areas.
- Walrond Road, which bisects the site, currently provides parking for approximately ten cars.
- The WW2 gun emplacement on Sandpit Field is periodically associated with antisocial behaviour and requires management oversight. The underground structure is also showing significant signs of distress with internal walls having collapsed.
- Ground maintenance, tree care, and standard horticultural work follow the Council's routine schedule.
- Minor safety incidents have been recorded in high footfall areas, often linked to degraded surfaces or infrastructure.
- Footpaths across the site are uneven and do not fully meet accessibility standards, limiting inclusive access for residents and visitors.
- The event field becomes waterlogged after rainfall restricting use and can have an impact on events.
- Larger events are unable to obtain sufficient electrical supply for their activities, thus requiring the use of fossil fuel generators.

The Council currently supports a wide range of community projects both directly and indirectly. While the Green Seafront Project is expected to use up a significant proportion of the Council's capital reserves, it remains important that the Council retains some flexibility to continue to support community projects into the future for the benefit of the town, such as those listed in section 1.2.3.

1.4 Potential scope and key service requirements, benefits, risks, constraints and dependencies

1.4.1 Potential business scope and key service requirements

This section identifies the scope of the project by aligning the core and desirable changes against each business requirement. The elements are defined as:

- Core – 'Essential' changes without which the project will not be judged a success

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- Desirable – ‘Additional’ changes which can potentially be justified on a value for money basis

No	Requirement	Core	Desirable
1.	Events	<p>Events can continue at least to the current level.</p> <p>Water and electricity maintained.</p> <p>Access retained and DDA compliant.</p>	<p>Enlarge the event space.</p> <p>Create additional event spaces.</p> <p>Increase DDA compliant access points.</p> <p>Improve utilities.</p> <p>Winter matting for year-round use</p> <p>Improve accessibility between beach and Green Seafront.</p>
2.	Beach Huts	<p>Bring whole beach hut area back into use.</p> <p>Improve general look and feel of the current tired site.</p>	<p>Improve beach hut provision, access, and income.</p> <p>Increase beach hut numbers, provide additional services such as toilets, showers, washing up etc.</p>
3.	Accessibility	<p>Maintain current accessibility to site.</p>	<p>Improve access across site.</p> <p>Improve access paths from Shore Road.</p> <p>Improve access to beach huts.</p>
4.	Maintenance	<p>Stop monitoring; avoid increase in maintenance; reduce liability;</p>	<p>Low maintenance plantings.</p>
5.	Tourism	<p>Maintain tourism levels and reputation.</p>	<p>Enhance tourism levels and reputation.</p> <p>Site available for out of season use (events etc).</p> <p>Year-round tourism.</p>
6.	Environmental Improvement	<p>Deliver 10% net biodiversity gain.</p> <p>Improve electrics to reduce the need for generators.</p> <p>Improve access to drinking water (refill points).</p>	<p>Deliver 10%+ net biodiversity gain.</p> <p>Improve electrics to eliminate the need for generators.</p>

1.4.2 Determine Benefits

This section will detail the anticipated benefits as a result of the programme (it should be noted that these are not in any particular order).

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No.	Category	Description	Benefit Type	Beneficiaries
1.	Improved visitor experience	Higher quality of visit due to improved amenities and environment leading to increased spend and duration of stay	Strategic / Economic	STC, local businesses, visitors
2.	Community	Increased wellbeing through greater use of the outdoor space	Social	Community
3.	Reduced anti-social behaviour	Design-led deterrents to negative behaviours.	Social / Management	STC, community
4.	Enhanced beach/seafront scene	More attractive and vibrant coastal environment	Strategic / Social	Community, visitors, local businesses
5.	Increased visitor numbers	More people visiting the area	Strategic / Economic	STC, local businesses
6.	Increased accessibility	Better access for people with disabilities and limited mobility	Strategic / Social	Community, visitors, local businesses
7.	Enhanced local economy	More visitor spending in local shops and services	Economic	Businesses, STC
8.	Increased beach hut income	Higher occupancy and income from beach huts	Financial	STC
9.	Increased kiosk income	More footfall leads to increased sales	Financial	STC
10.	Reduced maintenance costs	Fewer repairs and lower ongoing costs	Financial / Management	STC
11.	Environmental	Increased biodiversity through the 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Social / Environmental	Community

1.4.3 Determine Risks

A comprehensive project risk register is actively maintained with risks reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Given the scale and complexity of this project, a range of risks may impact successful project delivery, and their likelihood / severity can evolve over time. The table below outlines the top ten risks identified at the time of writing (February 2026), representing the most significant current threats to the project together with the comprehensive list of mitigation measures in place to ensure that they are not realised.

No.	Risk Description	Level	Mitigation
1.	Scheme has Insufficient Funding	Very High	Investigate all funding options. Reduce scope of scheme to match budget available. Consider asset disposal. Develop robust five stage business case to maximise potential for grant opportunities.
2.	Charity Ownership of Land	Very High	Ensure appropriate specialist legal advice is sought in advance to understand risks. Ensure sufficient budget within project plan for specialist legal advice is required. Ensure early engagement with Charity Commission regarding project.
3.	Public may not support increase in precept required for repayment of a potential loan (if required).	Very High	Ensure that the 'funding gap' is made clear to the public at every opportunity and that consultation is undertaken to enable the public to understand the difference between the two options being taken forward.
4.	Cost of delivering scheme exceeds budget.	High	Undertake ECI to reduce risk. Engage effective project management. Ensure all relevant prelim surveys completed. Ensure updated cost estimates for each gateway.
5.	Resources – People / Capacity	High	Work with Dorset Council. Engage DC Project Manager. Employ Project Support Officer.
7.	Rising Costs / Inflation	High	Ensure project financing has built in from outset options regarding inflation and other contingencies. Review materials list to ensure potential future availability/suitable alternatives. Restrict project timetable. Ensure effective procurement/frameworks to fix costs as much as is feasible.
8.	Extreme Weather	High	Ensure timing of works insofar as is possible to avoid likely periods of bad weather based on previous years' data. Ensure contingency for delays due to bad weather built into project plan. Construction period now estimated to be 35 weeks from early September to April. Some spare capacity exists in April, May and June before peak season.
9.	Unknown Ground Conditions	High	Undertake GPR survey, UXO survey and utility, drainage and topographical surveys in advance of works commencing. Undertake monitoring for ground water/movement in advance of works commencing.
10.	Planning Permission Timescales	High	Develop robust project programme, enter into PPA to get right first time and work with planners to see how long will take.

1.4.4 Determine Constraints

This section will detail the limitations that we may face during the life of the programme.

No.	Constraint	Description / Impact
1.	Geographic	Physical location and environmental context of the seafront limit options and access
2.	Time period (season/economy)	Work must consider seasonal tourism and weather impacts on delivery and economy
3.	Shore Road traffic	Road must be closed during construction, affecting access and traffic flow
4.	Project timescales	Risk of continued slippage and cost inflation
5.	Local events	Construction should not conflict with public events – requires early notification
6.	Funding availability	Constraints on capital and revenue budgets
7.	Charity-owned land	Subject to charity law and oversight – added complexity
8.	Stopping up of Walrond Road	Requires legal process to close or divert highway rights
9.	Underground services	Existing utilities may be impacted and need relocation or protection
10.	Neighbours	Proximity to residential and commercial properties – risk of objections or disruption
11.	Other projects	Timelines may overlap or conflict with other ongoing local initiatives
12.	Beach recharge	Environmental and timing constraints on coastal works
13.	Planning constraints	Need for permissions, consents, and compliance with local and national policies
14.	Biodiversity Net Gain (10%)	Project must demonstrate and deliver required ecological enhancements
15.	Continue to support community projects	The Council remains keen to ensure sufficient financial flexibility to continue to support other community projects around the town.

1.4.5 Determine Dependencies

This section relates to the things that must be in place and/or managed elsewhere.

No.	Dependency	Description / Link to Project Delivery
1.	Charity Commission	Approvals or consent required for use of charity land
2.	Securing funding	Project cannot proceed without confirmed capital/revenue funding
3.	Stopping up of Walrond Road	Legal process must be completed before work can begin in this area
4.	Planning permission	Full planning consent required before commencement of any physical works
5.	Shore Road	Temporary closure or modification is required while works being undertaken – impacts scheduling
6.	Beach recharge / coastal defence / Wessex Water	Works are interlinked and must be coordinated with wider environmental schemes

1.5 Strategic Case Conclusion

The Strategic context demonstrates that the Swanage Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project is strongly justified, strategically aligned, and necessary to address a clearly evidenced and escalating risk. Swanage Town Council, as the responsible authority and trustee, plays a central role in maintaining a seafront that is critical to the town's economy, supporting over £77 million in annual visitor spending and acting as a key location for events, recreation, and community life. The project is firmly embedded within a comprehensive framework of local, regional, and national strategies, including the Councils' Corporate Plans, the Swanage Seafront Masterplan, and wider planning, environmental, and coastal management policies, all of which prioritise sustainable tourism, climate resilience, accessibility, and high-quality public spaces. It also aligns with and complements a range of concurrent infrastructure and regeneration projects, requiring careful coordination to maximise value and minimise disruption.

The case for change is driven by significant and worsening ground instability, supported by extensive monitoring evidence, which poses risks to public safety, accessibility, and the long-term viability of the site. Without intervention, these issues threaten the town's economic vitality, community wellbeing, and reputation. The project therefore seeks to deliver long-term stabilisation, enhanced public realm, improved accessibility, and environmental benefits, while reducing maintenance liabilities and supporting year-round economic activity. Although delivery is subject to risks, constraints, and

dependencies – including funding, land ownership, planning, and coordination with other schemes – the Strategic Case clearly establishes that intervention is both necessary and aligned with broader policy objectives, ensuring the long-term sustainability of this vital coastal asset.

2. The Economic Case

2.1 Economic Case Summary

The Economic Case sets out a structured and evidence-based approach to identifying the preferred options for the Green Seafront, ensuring alignment with the project’s strategic objectives and long-term value for money. It begins by establishing a clear set of Critical Success Factors (CSFs), which form the foundation for option appraisal. These CSFs emphasise the need to maintain and enhance the quality, safety, and accessibility of the site over a 100-year lifespan, while supporting the local economy through tourism, events, and increased year-round use. They also prioritise environmental improvements, including biodiversity, alongside reducing long-term maintenance costs and ensuring statutory compliance. Collectively, these criteria ensure that economic, social, and environmental outcomes are considered in a balanced way.

A long list of options was developed and assessed against the CSFs. The “do nothing” option was found to present significant risks, including potential site failure, reputational damage, and loss of economic activity, and scored the lowest against the criteria. The “do minimum” option offered short-term continuity but retained substantial long-term risks and ongoing maintenance liabilities. The “asset disposal” option reduced Council liability but was deemed commercially unattractive and unlikely to generate meaningful financial returns, while also limiting future control over the site. In contrast, the re-stabilisation option performed strongly, achieving full alignment with the CSFs. Although it involves significant upfront capital investment, it provides long-term certainty, supports the visitor economy, and enables future revenue generation opportunities to partially mitigate the loss of investment income. As a result, it was the only option taken forward.

The shortlist stage refined the re-stabilisation option by assessing alternative engineering solutions. Soil nailing was identified as the preferred method due to its durability, cost-effectiveness, and ability to maintain the existing character and accessibility of the site while delivering a 100-year design life. Building on this engineering solution, design options were developed to determine the most appropriate level of intervention. An initial enhanced scheme demonstrated strong alignment with the CSFs but was not considered affordable. Through public consultation and further design work, a revised “New Option”

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was developed, combining key enhancements with a more proportionate cost. Alongside a lower cost “Essential” option, both schemes were progressed for further development.

The Economic Case also considers a comprehensive range of funding options to support delivery. The Council’s capital reserves provide a strong foundation but are insufficient to meet the full cost of the scheme. Grant funding remains an important opportunity but is uncertain and highly competitive. Borrowing offers flexibility but introduces long-term financial commitments that may not be sustainable. Additional options, including asset disposal, provide supplementary funding opportunities but will not fully bridge the funding gap. Post-implementation income streams, such as beach hut rentals and commercial activity, offer longer-term financial benefits that support the financial sustainability of the Town Council by helping to mitigate the loss of investment income

Overall, the Economic Case demonstrates that full re-stabilisation, supported by a balanced and blended funding strategy, represents the preferred approach. It delivers the strongest alignment with the project’s objectives, secures long-term economic and social value, and ensures the continued viability of the Green Seafront as a key asset for the town.

2.2 The Critical Success Factors for the Project

Key Messages – Critical Success Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust set of Critical Success Factors underpin the Economic Case and provide a consistent basis for option appraisal • The project prioritises long-term sustainability, safety, and a 100-year lifespan for the Green Seafront • Supporting the local economy through tourism, events, and year-round use is a central objective • Environmental enhancement, accessibility, and reduced long-term costs are integral to project success

The purpose of the critical success factors is to provide a basis to score the range of options detailed later in this business case.

Improve/maintain quality of the Green Seafront

- Site is safe and is sufficient to last 100 years before additional work might be required.
- Area for events is at least maintained in size.
- Green Seafront area is well connected to other town services including the beach.
- Biodiversity enhanced across site.
- Opportunities for antisocial behaviour reduced.

Support and improve the Swanage Economy

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- Retain a first-class event space which is able to support at least the current suite of events that take place.
- The event space has the potential to deal with new and changing events over the next 100 years to support community and tourism related events.
- The event space can be utilised for out of season events.
- Ensure a seafront site which supports recreational use and climate resilience and mitigates against any potential future loss of beach areas due to sea level rise.
- Increase accessibility to the site.
- Create new commercial and revenue generating opportunities.

Improve delivery of services on the Green Seafront

- Accessibility to and across the site is improved for people with all abilities.
- Enhanced usable event space to which supports a broader range of community and tourism focused events throughout the year.
- Increased number of beach huts, some of which are fully accessible.
- Space used all year round, supporting winter beach hut bookings and seasonal event programming.

Reduce cost of service provision for the Green Seafront

- No further requirement to undertake ground monitoring
- Minimise requirement to undertake reactive repairs to the site, including minor and ad-hoc, to ensure continued safety for users

Meeting statutory and regulatory compliance for the site

- Site is a safe area, and deteriorating infrastructure has been replaced
- Open access is retained for the public across the site
- Weather station retained as a vital asset for public information and scientific monitoring
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

2.3 The Long List of Options for the Green Seafront

Key Messages – Long List of Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive long list of options was assessed against the Critical Success Factors • Options such as “do nothing,” “do minimum,” and “asset disposal” present significant risks or limited benefits • These options fail to deliver long-term value or adequately support the local economy

- Full re-stabilisation is the only option that meets all objectives and is therefore taken forward

A number of options exist to achieve the critical success factors. A workshop was held at which Town Councillors considered the strategic objectives and critical success factors and led to the development of the list of options below to consider.

1. **Do nothing:** Keep site open to the public until risk increases and leads to a gradual or immediate closure of area(s).
2. **Asset disposal:** Dispose of all or some of the land to eliminate liability.
3. **Do minimum:** Retain minimal but safe public access to the event spaces and beach hut area.
4. **Re-stabilisation:** Using a range of engineering options.

2.3.1 Detailed Consideration of the Four Options

Below can be found a review of each of the options listed above, along with a score against the Critical Success Factors. A full list of the scores can be found in the [Appendix B \(Options Scoring Table\)](#).

Option 1: Do nothing – Keep site open to the public until risk increases and leads to a gradual or immediate closure of area(s).	
Description	This option would see no planned maintenance work being undertaken on the site throughout the lifespan of the site (assume 100 years).
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No upfront capital costs. • No political decision required – enables the Council to focus on other priorities. • No disruption to the town from proposed building works. • Reduced requirement for the Council to take over ownership of the area from the two Charitable Trusts or at least this could be undertaken over a longer period. • By delaying any works to a future period, could provide time to build up capital reserves to fund a scheme at some point in the future.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council would not be able to assure event organisers and other users of the site that it would remain open for the future. • Capital monies would need to be set aside to undertake any potential emergency works to ensure that any damage to the road infrastructure (owned by Dorset Council) is resolved quickly. Emergency works tend to be significantly higher in cost than planned work. • A full or partial collapse could lead to a permanent loss of all or parts of the site, including Sandpit Field as an event space with a significant impact on the local economy as events may be postponed, rescheduled, or lost.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collapse could lead to a significant cost spent to rectify issues. This could be unfunded so may require closing of the area for a long period until suitable funding is identified • A full or part collapse could lead to unsightly areas which may impact on the reputation of the town as a primary visitor destination, i.e. run down areas. • A gradual approach of closing areas with fencing to protect users could lead to a perception of a rundown area, impacting on the visitor economy. • In this scenario, it would not be possible to invest in the purchase of beach huts, so this revenue income would not be achieved. • The current costs associated with ground monitoring and risk management would still need to be maintained to protect the public.
CSF Score	0/25 (0%)
Conclusions	This option fails to meet the critical success factors to any degree. It is clear that this option would likely lead to greater deterioration over a period of time, which would also still require capital investment to make any emergency repairs to adjacent infrastructure.
Carry forward	No

Option 2: Asset disposal – Dispose of all or some of the land to eliminate liability before any works are undertaken (the Spa area only)

Description	The Spa beach hut site is sold to a third party. Any sale of Sandpit Field and the Weather Station Field has been excluded from this options appraisal as it is difficult to see how a commercial entity would wish to procure these sites if they are to be retained as public open space as very little income could be derived to ensure a surplus is generated. In addition, both the Weather Station and Sandpit Field are owned by Trusts and any transfer to a private entity would be unlikely to be in accordance with the Trust's objects.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's liability regarding potential work or risk to the public are eliminated (but passed on to a third party). • No capital or revenue required. • Could encourage private investment in a key area on the seafront to promote the local economy. • Could bring in a one-off income to the Council, however professional valuation advice has suggested that a cost of circa £60,000 would be required to be paid to a developer to take ownership of the beach hut site only.

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Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to sell on a commercial basis – unlikely that any commercial buyer would be prepared to pay for the risk of potential collapse. • Professional valuation advice has suggested that if the stabilisation work was undertaken, then the site could be sold to a private business to operate beach huts for commercial gain. It has been demonstrated that the income to be generated from such a sale would be significantly less than the cost of the works required. • Could bring in a one-off income to the Council, however professional valuation advice has suggested that a cost of circa £60,000 would be required to be paid to a developer to take ownership of the beach hut site only. • Private ownership would lead to lack of Council control over development in key areas which may affect ability to achieve critical success factors. • Could take years to sell, leading to an area increasingly in need of maintenance works. • If the site remains on the market for a long time, at what point might the council decide to do something different with the area? • Planning restrictions would only permit the construction of beach huts at this location.
CSF Score	13/25 (52%)
Conclusions	Disposing of the Spa area of the Green Seafront might incur a number of benefits to the Town Council, particularly around reduction of liability. However, it is considered unlikely that a commercial entity would procure the whole site, or indeed just the site for beach huts, in advance of any works being undertaken.
Carry forward	No

Option 3: Do minimum – Retain minimal but safe public access to the event spaces and beach hut area

Description	In this option the minimal amount would be spent to ensure safe public access is retained to the key areas of the site.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No upfront capital costs. • No political decision required – enables the Council to focus on other priorities. • By delaying any works to a future period, will provide time to build up capital reserves to fund a scheme at some point in the future. • No disruption to the town from proposed building works • Reduced requirement for the Council to take over ownership of the area from the two Charitable Trusts or at least this could be undertaken over a longer period.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key spaces remain open to the public. • Revenue would continue to be generated from beach huts.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital monies would need to be set aside to undertake any potential emergency works. • A collapse could lead to a reduced, temporary or permanent loss of Sandpit Field as an event space with a significant impact on the local economy as events may be postponed, rescheduled, or lost. • A collapse could lead to a significant cost spent to rectify issues. This could be emergency costs and could include costs associated with the highway if damage is caused. This could be unfunded so may require closing of the area for a long period until suitable funding is identified. • A full or part collapse could lead to unsightly areas which may impact on the reputation of the town as a primary visitor destination, i.e. run down areas. • A gradual approach of closing areas with fencing to protect users, along with minor emergency works, could lead to a perception of a rundown area, impacting on the visitor economy. • The current costs associated with ground monitoring and risk management would still need to be maintained to protect the public.
CSF Score	2/10 (20%)
Conclusions	This option would ensure some continuity of the use of the area; however, it is likely that over time areas will be cordoned off as the ground increasingly slips. In addition, a capital reserve would need to be retained for any potential emergency works required to not only ensure the area remains open to the public but also mitigates any potential damage to the adjacent infrastructure. In this option the risk of collapse is still retained.
Carry forward	No

Option 4: Re-stabilisation using a range of engineering options	
Description	A full re-stabilisation of the site to ensure that it meets the needs of the town for 100 years. A range of different engineering options can be considered at a later stage.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further requirement to undertake ground monitoring and risks are mitigated. • Meets the greatest number of Critical Success Factors • The site will continue to support the local economy into the future. • As sea levels rise the beach will shrink, thus the Green Seafront will start to play a greater part of the visitor experience in Swanage.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site can be managed in a routine manner without any risk of collapse. • Revenue from beach huts can be utilised. • Investment into the event facilities (i.e. improved water and electric) can be undertaken. • Increased biodiversity will be developed. • Opportunities exist to add potential enhancements to the site including the closure of Walrond Road and increased accessibility. • This option would still allow the potential of the disposal of the Spa beach hut site after the works have been completed and indeed valuation advice suggests that a relatively high capital receipt could be obtained, although not sufficient to cover the cost of the build.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost – leading to the use of the Council’s reserves. • All options will likely require third party funding to close the gap between cost and available Council reserves. • The use of reserves will lead to a reduction in Council income from investments, which will not be fully replaced by new income generation. • Work will take around 6 months, which will lead to significant inconvenience and disruption to the town. • This type of project will be a large capital project which will require significant member and officer input.
CSF Score	25/25 (100%)
Conclusions	This option meets the full range of Critical Success Factors, although has the highest upfront costs
Carry forward	Yes

2.3.2 Summary of options

	Option	Conclusion	Score	C/F
1	Do nothing – Keep site open to the public until risk increases and leads to a gradual or immediate closure of area(s).	This option fails to meet the critical success factors to any degree. It is clear that this option would likely lead to greater deterioration over a period of time, which would also still require capital investment to make any emergency repairs to adjacent infrastructure	0/25 (0%)	No
2	Asset disposal – Dispose of all or some of the land to eliminate liability	Disposing of the Green Seafront would incur a number of benefits to the Town Council, particularly around upfront capital investment. However, it is considered unlikely that a commercial	13/25 (52%)	No

		entity would procure the whole site, or indeed just the site for beach huts, in advance of any works being undertaken.		
3	Do minimum – Retain minimal but safe public access to the event spaces and beach hut area	This option would ensure some continuity of the use of the area; however, it is likely that over time areas will be cordoned off as the ground increasingly slips. In addition, a capital reserve would need to be retained for any potential emergency works required to not only ensure the area remains open to the public but also mitigates any damage to the adjacent infrastructure.	2/10 (20%)	No
4	Re-stabilisation using a range of engineering options	This option meets the full range of Critical Success Factors, although has the highest upfront costs	25/25 (100%)	Yes

2.4 The Short List of Options for the Green Seafront

Key Messages – Short List of Options	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two options have been taken forward; Essential Option and New Option • Re-stabilisation is considered as part of an engineering assessment, with soil nailing identified as the preferred solution • Design development has focused on balancing affordability with maximising benefits to the community • Public consultation has played a key role in shaping the two options 	

Four options were considered as the ‘long list’. Considering the advantages, disadvantages, cost and how they score against the Critical Success Factors identified in the Strategic Case, the re-stabilisation option is the one to be taken forward into the short list below.

2.4.1 Re-stabilisation: Engineering Options

The re-stabilisation option includes three engineering options:

4.1 – Slope Regrading

4.2 – Sheet Piles

4.3 – Soil nails

These methodologies were first set out by the Council’s engineering consultancy partner, WSP within their Feasibility Study 2022 and later refined within the WSP landscape design options with soil nailing emerging as the most appropriate methodology for this

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scheme. This was confirmed by a report completed by Heidelberg Materials, the Dorset Highways engineering contractor in 2025 at the request of the Council to consider the most appropriate stabilisation methodology for the Green Seafront. This information can also be found on the following webpage: www.swanage.gov.uk/green-seafront-scheme.

Option 4.1: Re-stabilisation using slope regrading	
Description	A civil engineering process to reshape the surface of a slope to enhance stability, control drainage, or prepare for construction. Additional options include benching the existing bank, importation of granular fill to strengthen sub soils.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs should be able to cater for existing layout and maintain accessibility • Drainage can be improved with counterfort trenches (but these can alter aesthetics of the surface)
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could lead to the introduction of new structures such as retaining walls or stepped features which could change the look and feel of the site as well as potentially reduce access to some areas. This is likely to be the case at the highest areas to the northern end of the site • Large excavations are required which can result in high disposal costs as well as increased HGV traffic exporting waste material and importing fill • Due to limited access to Swanage for HGVs the cut/fill exercise would take longer than other options resulting in higher costs for similar exercises • Works are more susceptible to inclement weather than other options and would need to be scheduled appropriately
CSF score	16/25 (64%)
Conclusions	While slope regrading would mitigate the stabilisation issues on the seafront, this is likely to be the most disruptive approach for the town and would also likely lead to areas that were not permitted to be used by the public, with the result that the look and feel of the site could be radically different.
Carry forward	No

Option 4.2: Re-stabilisation using sheet piles	
Description	Sheet piling is a construction technique that uses interlocking sheets of steel that are driven into the ground forming a continuous wall that is used for earth retention
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be a better solution to soil nailing as sheet piles are stiffer if no slope movement is required, but a full continuous wall must be built
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheet piles are a heavier solution than soil nails

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a marine environment, sheet piles could have a design life of 5 years. Piles with additional protection could include design lives up to 20-50 years, although costs will rise. This assumes that regular work will need to be undertaken to replace corroded piles • Multiple piled locations would be required, thus impacting on drainage • Building a full continuous wall would change the 'look and feel' of the site • Likely to be the most expensive option for this site
CSF score	15/25 (60%)
Conclusions	While sheet piles may be the most effective solution, these have been discounted because the lifespan of the metal piles do not meet the Critical Success Factors associated with reducing the lifetime cost to the Council. They are also the most expensive option and could lead to a change in the 'look and feel' of the site.
Carry forward	No

Option 4.3: Re-stabilisation using soil nails	
Description	Soil nailing is a technique for reinforcing slopes and retaining walls by drilling grouted steel bars (nails) in the soil to increase its stability. The nails resist tensile forces, strengthening the ground to prevent failure or slippage.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As soil nails are constructed in a grid, soil nailing offers flexibility to avoid existing features e.g. utilities, small retaining walls, pathways, and drainage • Soil nails can have a corrosion protection of 100 years • Treatment with soil nails does not impact public accessibility and the existing slope profile • Standard approach for slope stabilisation works and is the recommended approach by the Council's appointed engineers • Cheaper to install than sheet piles • The Phase 1 stabilisation that took place on the southern section of Shore Road used soil nails
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can take longer to install than other methods, depending on ground conditions • Nails can corrode over time and deform, depending on ground conditions
CSF score	24/25 (96%)
Conclusions	This option would retain the look and feel of the site and ensure that no further works would be required for the lifespan of the project
Carry forward	Yes

2.4.3 Summary of Engineering Options

	Option	Conclusion	Score	C/F
4.1	Re-stabilisation using slope regrading	While slope regrading would mitigate the stabilisation issues on the seafront, this is likely to be the most disruptive approach for the town and would also likely lead to areas that were not permitted to be used by the public, with the result that the look and feel of the site could be radically different.	16/25 (64%)	No
4.2	Re-stabilisation using sheet piles	While sheet piles may be the most effective solution, these have been discounted because the lifespan of the metal piles do not meet the Critical Success Factors associated with reducing the lifetime cost to the Council. They are also the most expensive option and could lead to a change in the 'look and feel' of the site.	15/25 (60%)	No
4.3	Re-stabilisation using soil nails	This option would retain the look and feel of the site and ensure that no further works would be required for the lifespan of the project	24/25 (96%)	Yes

The engineering option to carry forward will be 4.3, re-stabilisation using soil nails.

2.4.4 Re-stabilisation: Design Options

Using the short-listed option of 4.3 as the engineering solution the following options have been developed for consideration within the design options shortlist.

The 'design options' relate to the physical design for the Green Seafront, using soil nailing as the underlying engineering approach to stabilisation. The design work was led by WSP Ltd in 2023 as follows:

4.3a Essential Option – Generally retain the site as it is with minor enhancements.

4.3b Enhanced Option – Undertake a major re-visioning of the site to incorporate key themes such as improved events space, public realm, toilets, beach huts and accessibility and the filling in of Walrond Road.

The Council's engineering partners have advised that around 6 months construction work would be required for both options.



Site plan of Essential Option



Site plan of the Enhanced Option

Option 4.3a: Essential Option	
Description	Retain essentially the same appearance as current
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest cost option • The site remains essentially as it now so retains the current look and feel • All Critical Success Factors can be achieved with this option, albeit on a basic level • The Town Council has close to sufficient funding to procure this option with limited/no external financial support
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option does not include additional facilities such as toilets or a catering kiosk • Accessibility remains essentially the same as current with limited improvements in this area
Cost	£4,000,000 (assumes late 2026 build)
CSF score	15/25 (60%)
Conclusions	This option meets the Critical Success Factors at their most basic and is therefore the cheapest option
Carry forward	Yes

Option 4.3b: Enhanced Option	
Description	Undertake significant customer improvements
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the widest range of improvements across the various critical success factors.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest cost option. This option would require over 50% external financial support to be achieved.
Cost	£11,500,000 (assumes late 2026 build).
CSF score	25/25 (100%).
Conclusions	This option meets the Critical Success Factors very successfully, but at a significant cost, which would require external funding.
Carry forward	Yes

2.4.5 Public Engagement Autumn 2023

These options were included in a public engagement undertaken in September and October 2023 by Dorset Coast Forum on behalf of the Town Council. Engagement resulted in:

- 1,045 responses to the questionnaire
- 122 contributions to the ideas board
- a range of pop-up stalls and workshops which engaged with 344 participants
- 12,000 views on social media
- 4,000 webpage views

Further information on this engagement and the results produced by Dorset Coast Forum in early 2024 can be found here: [Round 1 Consultation – 2023 | Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation & Shore Road Enhancement Scheme | Dorset Coast Have Your Say](#)

Feedback Summary from Round 1 of the Public Engagement – Autumn 2023

Conversations and survey results showed a fairly equal split between the essential scheme and the enhanced scheme presented. The enhanced was slightly more popular with 51.1% of respondents to the survey preferring it with 43.6% choosing the essential scheme.

The enhanced scheme (circa £11 million) is not affordable and therefore is not being taken forward by the Council as an option.

Preferences from the enhanced scheme have been incorporated as far as is possible into the new scheme.

The cost of the enhanced scheme was the most common theme of respondents' answers when they explained why they selected the essential scheme as their preferred option (40% of respondents who selected essential scheme).

Conversely, the 'opportunity' presented by the stabilisation works to enhance and invest in the area was the most common theme of respondents' answers when explaining why they selected the enhanced scheme as their preferred option (40% of respondents who selected enhanced scheme).

76% of all respondents agreed that it was a good opportunity to enhance the area if work was going to take place anyway.

Generally, improvements to the Green Seafront were considered important by respondents:

- 76% of respondents agreed that significantly improved accessibility to all areas was an important feature of any seafront scheme,
- 75% agreed that improving the green spaces through increased planting was important, and the additional events field (53%) and seafront plaza and café (59%) had support.
- Crucially, retaining a large events field was viewed as the most important feature (90% of respondents agreed)

The integration of improved traffic management was consistently cited through the survey. Of those who felt there was something missing from the enhanced scheme – 'the pedestrianisation of Shore Road' and 'traffic management' were the most popular themes of respondents' answers. There were also over 100 mentions of 'Shore Road' in all the comments.

Subsequently, the Town Council agreed to no longer take forward the Enhanced Option, principally due to its high cost, large funding gap and noting the public concern over these issues. Instead, a 'middle' way was developed which incorporated the key desirables from the Enhanced Option into a 'New Option' at a significantly reduced cost.

It was agreed in December 2023, to continue with the following two options:

4.3a(v2) Essential Option – Generally retain the site as it is with minor enhancements.

4.3c New Option – A combination of the above two schemes considering public feedback from the 2023 Green Seafront public engagement, including the filling in of Walrond Road.

These were then subject to public engagement once again in the summer of 2025.

During 2024 an 'Early Contractor Involvement (ECI)' was undertaken, whereby Heidelberg Materials UK undertook a review of the original costings and proposals undertaken by

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WSP. They provided an updated cost, which included feedback from the engagement. These costs were included in the options below.

After the ECI, the Essential Option was costed at £4,500,000.

Option 4.3c: New Option	
Description	Undertake significant customer improvements at reduced cost
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines the best bits of the two previous options based on public feedback undertaken during 2023.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of the option remains high and will still require external financial support.
Cost	£6,500,000
CSF score	25/25 (100%)
Conclusions	This option balances cost and improvements.
Carry forward	Yes

In the summer of 2025, a second round of public engagement was undertaken around the two options indicated immediately above and known as the 'Essential' and the 'New Option'. The key summary of the engagement can be found below or for more detail please see here: [Green Seafront Engagement Summary.pdf](#). Most of the features of the New Option received strong support (e.g. improved accessibility, closure of Walrond Road and enhanced planting). However, uncertainty around the funding of the New Option appeared to play a significant part in limiting overall support.

Key recurring themes from Round 2 of the Public Engagement – Summer 2025

The survey showed a slight preference for the New Option over the Essential Option, with a 2.3% difference (with 45.1% preferring the New Option and 42.8% preferring the Essential Option – equating to 34 votes), while 12.1% of respondents expressed no clear preference. Although some respondents opposed both the Shore Road and Green Seafront proposals due to a perceived link between them, the options were independent.

Access and accessibility

- **Improved access:** 63.9% of respondents agreed that the new option would enhance access across the Green Seafront.
- **Inclusive design:** Strong support for wider walkways, level paths, and improved access to the Primary Event Space.
- **Connectivity:** Filling in Walrond Road was viewed positively for site-wide movement, with some concerns about beach access.

Budgets and costs

- **Cost information:** Respondents requested clearer cost information
- **Low-maintenance design:** a clear preference.

Design features

- **Walrond Road:** A majority (60.2%) of respondents to this question supported this feature, indicating broad approval for its inclusion in future plans.
- **Seating:** Respondents requested a range of seating types
- **Natural plantings:** Strong preference for natural planting and trees that require minimal upkeep
- **Architectural character:** Buildings should reflect traditional seaside styles

Future ideas

Suggestions focused on sustainability and community use, including renewable energy, water refill stations, social spaces, and improved infrastructure for events.

2.4.6 Design Amendments Arising from the Public Engagement

The Town Council reviewed the feedback from the Round 2 engagement and developed a further set of designs incorporating, where possible, the preferences indicated by the public engagement. These were agreed in January 2026 as follows.

Design amendments applied to both the ‘Essential’ and ‘New Option’:

- Provide a 3-phase electric supply to Sandpit Field in order to increase electric capacity for events and significantly reduce the reliance on generators

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- Increase the amount of maintainable, natural greenspace planting and trees.
- Provide an electric supply to all proposed beach huts and provide low level lighting to the beach hut area to support year-round use.

Additional design amendments applied to the 'New Option' only:

- Small event space – removal of the proposed small shelter, the addition of an electric supply and the creation of a level access route to this area
- Creation of an additional step free route from Shore Road onto the Green Seafront (adjacent to the proposed plaza area across to De Moulham Road).
- Conversion of the previously proposed informal grass paths to a crushed stone finish to improve accessibility.
- Additional seating and interpretative signage and information points.
- An increase in size of the proposed new toilet block.
- The inclusion of areas of 'all weather surfacing' to some grass and path locations.

These amendments were provided to Heidelberg Materials UK for early contractor involvement, and the outcome of this process was presented to the Town Council at the end of January 2026. It was also noted that the updated inflation cost assumptions were adjusted for construction starting in September 2027.

Together with the updated inflation assumptions, the revised cost estimates incorporating the above changes as of January 2026 were:

- Essential Option (v3) – £4,750,000
- New Option (v2) – £6,900,000

2.4.7 Taking forward the Preferred Option

The Council considers the New Option to be its preferred option as it delivers a significantly enhanced range of economic, environmental and community benefits when compared to the Essential Option, while remaining aligned with the project's strategic objectives. Although both options are being progressed in parallel to ensure deliverability, the New Option represents a more ambitious intervention that maximises place-making opportunities, supports increased visitor dwell time, and improves long-term resilience of the seafront. The benefits of the New Option are summarised below:

Benefit Area	Essential Option	New Option
Public Realm	Basic repairs and like-for-like upgrades	High-quality redesign with enhanced materials and layout
Economic Impact	Maintains current visitor levels	Increases visitor numbers and local spend including supporting out of season economic activity

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Climate Resilience	Meets minimum compliance	Improved resilience and sustainable design features
Community Value	Maintains existing use	Creates flexible, multi-use community spaces
Place-Making	Limited enhancement	Strong identity and destination appeal

Both options will be developed with the required detail to submit a planning application in summer 2026.

PROPOSED GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN (with annotations)



New Option v1

2.5 The Funding Options available to the Council

Key Messages – Funding Options

- A wide range of funding options have been identified, each with advantages and limitations
- Council reserves provide a strong foundation but are insufficient to fully fund the scheme
- External funding, borrowing, and income generation provide options to bridge the funding gap
- The use of capital reserves, grants and post implementation revenue are considered the only applicable options for project funding

The funding options

The following broad range of different funding options are available to the Town Council. Each option has different advantages and disadvantages, and these are explored in more detail below.

1. Use of capital reserves
2. Grant funding
3. Disposal of existing assets
4. Borrowing
5. Increase income / reduce expenditure
6. Post implementation – Capital
7. Post implementation – Revenue

2.5.1 Drafting the funding options

Option 1: Use of capital reserves	
Description	The Council has developed a strong financial reserve of around £4m (see Financial Business Case) which can be used to fund a significant proportion of the costs associated with the proposal.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This fund is currently held by the Council. • There are no caveats to its use other than around capital requirements. • Reserves have been approved annually through the Council budget setting process to be set aside for the purpose of the project.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are not sufficient reserves to fund all options. • The use of reserves will remove the revenue benefit to the Council of investment income. • The Council will remove a significant reserve which could be used for alternative community projects.
Conclusions	The Council has a strong reserve that has been approved for the use of this project and is assumed to constitute the core funding. The reserves will continue to be built up in advance of the project where possible.
Carry forward	Yes

Option 2: Grant funding	
Description	<p>Grant funding from either Dorset Council, central government or another agency that supports the critical success factors of the project.</p> <p>To date the Council has attempted to access a number of different routes to secure grant funding. In 2025, an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was unsuccessful. Unfortunately, it</p>

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	has become apparent that very few grants are available to public bodies for large scale capital works.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impact on the Council (i.e. council tax etc.).
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are limited options for grant funding for ground stabilisation. • Where capital funding is available competition is extremely strong. • Some grants may require changes to the project which may not meet the CSFs as defined by the Council. • Land lacks historic features to qualify for Heritage Lottery funding. • Swanage does not meet deprivation criteria to unlock central government funds e.g. Levelling Up or Pride in Place. • Accessing grants can take up a significant amount of staff time and capacity and may not necessarily be successful. • Generally, grants are provided on a matched funding basis. • Potential for onerous grant terms and conditions.
Conclusions	Grant funding is one of the most attractive forms of funding, particularly if no caveats are imposed in regard to its use. The Council will continue to seek grant funding as the primary funding option alongside the use of its capital reserves allocated to this project.
Carry forward	Yes

Option 3: Disposal of existing assets before works begin to fund capital costs

Description	<p>The Town Council owns a wide range of assets, some of which it may be able to be released to generate capital receipts to fund the proposed works.</p> <p>The Council's Property Panel have reviewed the council's asset portfolio, and the Council has agreed that only a small number of minor asset disposals will be pursued, the largest of which relates to the vacant area by Burlington Chine Toilets. None of these will deliver large capital receipts to the Council.</p>
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sites may be of little value to the Council and disposal might have little to no effect on residents • Commercial development might lead to improvements that the Council would otherwise struggle to deliver.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely time required to dispose of assets does not accord with the project programme. • Assets may not be desirable for purchasers. • Planning restrictions exist on some site which may limit or exclude any commercial interest. • Capital receipts may not be substantial in comparison with estimated project costs.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in asset base of Council. • Disposal may lack community support.
Conclusions	Disposal of assets presents several challenges, but the right sites could potentially lead to some useful capital receipts. However, at the current time the Council does not envisage any significant asset disposals. The Council will continue to monitor available options.
Carry forward	No

Option 4: Borrowing	
Description	<p>A number of different avenues exist for accessing borrowing.</p> <p>The Public Works Loan Board is the primary organisation that loans capital financing to local authorities, although there are other options. In order to be approved for PWLB funding the Council must have a clear project which the loan is supporting and to demonstrate that the local taxpaying population are in support of the use of a loan.</p>
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans are relatively flexible and can be paid back over a long period of time if so wished. • Loans ensure that the Council retains full control over the project without any restrictions. • The use of loans is relatively common within the local authority sector.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear support of the local electorate is required to achieve approval from the PWLB. • Loans will be repayable for a period of time into the future and could restrict future spending on other projects. • The use of the loan will very likely require an increase in the precept, payable by all taxpayers. • Use of a loan could restrict future opportunities to support other community projects such as those listed in section 1.2.3. • A loan would increase the revenue expenditure for the Council. A £2.5m loan would equate to approximately an additional £200,000 annual expenditure for 25 years at a rate of over 6.5%. Combined with lost investment income this is challenging to the Council's financial sustainability.
Conclusions	Any increase on the Councils revenue budget due to borrowing would likely be difficult to keep within affordable parameters and may result in an inability to support other community projects.
Carry forward	No

Option 5: Increase income / reduce expenditure

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Description	<p>The Council operates an annual net budget (2025-26) of £0.9m, which is made up of £2.8m expenditure, £1.9m income and the balancing figure generated from the precept.</p> <p>Within these three areas, there could be a range of potential opportunities to increase the amount of funding to support the Green Seafront project.</p>
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any improvement in the Council's revenue position could lead to an increase in available funds for the project.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to achieve significant revenue contributions towards the project in the context of delivering a wide range of services in a challenging financial climate. Income is variable and can depend heavily on the weather, particularly as many of the Council's income sources are based on leisure and tourism type activities. A large percentage of expenditure is for fixed costs such as employment which is difficult to reduce without a major impact on service delivery. The Council is currently forecasting a 5% increase in the precept for the next three years.
Conclusions	<p>The Council will continue to consider these options as part of its approach to a prudent budget management process that supports the delivery of services and long-term financial sustainability.</p> <p>However, it will not produce a significant contribution to the costs of this project prior to September 2027.</p>
Carry forward	No

Option 6: Post Implementation Capital	
Description	<p>The following options exist with regards capital once the scheme has been constructed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of Spa site as a whole Dispose of beach huts (either individually or in sections).
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposal would generate capital receipts. Once disposed, Council will not be required to provide administration capacity. Future liability for the site will be transferred (at least for the lease period).
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments from disposal will occur after the site has incurred the build costs, therefore this does not help the Council in finding the necessary early financing. Once sites are disposed of, the Council would lose control over future development and income. The Council will not be able to generate revenue income to support its annual budget

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Conclusions	The sale of the Spa site would not only remove control of the area from the Council but would also remove annual revenue payments to support the Council's budget. Therefore, this option has not been carried forward. However, the sale of individual beach huts will be carried forward for further consideration.
Carry forward	No

Option 7: Post implementation – revenue	
Description	The following options exist with regards revenue once the scheme has been constructed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental of beach huts • Rental of the commercial space • Event space fees (small and large space)
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental provides a long-term revenue source • Beach hut rental is a well-established service already within the Town Council and the relevant administrative systems already exist • Beach hut rental could start immediately on release of the site • The proposed kiosk would be sited on an area that historically included a kiosk and a kiosk existed on the beach, opposite this site, until 2022 • This option ensures the Council retains control of options at the site
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential oversupply of beach huts on the market
Conclusions	Revenue options have a number of benefits to the Council. These options will be considered in greater detail in the financial business case.
Carry forward	Yes

2.5.2 Summary of the Funding Options

It should be noted that not all funding options are carried forward as part of the project, as seen below. The Council will however continue to operate a robust financial approach to budget management and will continue to monitor all funding options and if necessary, bring these back into the project if anything changes.

	Funding Option	Conclusion	Carry Forward
1.	Use of capital reserves	The Council has a strong reserve that has been approved for the use of this project and is assumed to constitute the core funding. The reserves will continue to be built up in advance of the project where possible.	Yes

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2.	Grant funding	Grant funding is one of the most attractive forms of funding, particularly if no caveats are imposed in regard to its use. The Council will continue to seek grant funding as the primary funding option alongside the use of its capital reserves allocated to this project.	Yes
3.	Disposal of existing assets	Disposal of assets presents several challenges, but the right sites could potentially lead to some useful capital receipts. However, at the current time the Council does not envisage any significant asset disposals. The Council will continue to monitor available options.	No
4.	Borrowing	Any increase on the Councils revenue budget due to borrowing would likely be difficult to keep within affordable parameters and may result in an inability to support other community projects.	No
5.	Increase income / reduce expenditure	The Council will continue to consider these options as part of its approach to a prudent budget management process that supports the delivery of services and long-term financial sustainability. However, it will not produce a significant contribution to the costs of this project prior to September 2027.	No
6.	Post implementation - Capital	The sale of the Spa site would not only remove control of the area from the Council but would also remove annual revenue payments to support the Council's budget. Therefore, this option has not been carried forward. However, the sale of individual beach huts will be carried forward for further consideration.	No
7.	Post implementation - Revenue	Revenue options have a number of benefits to the Council. These options will be considered in greater detail in the financial business case.	Yes

2.6 Economic Case Conclusion

The Economic Case for the Green Seafront Project sets out a robust, evidence-based appraisal process to identify the preferred option that delivers long-term value, sustainability, and alignment with strategic objectives. Using clearly defined Critical Success Factors focused on safety, a 100-year lifespan, economic growth, environmental enhancement, and reduced maintenance, a range of options were assessed. 'Do nothing,' 'do minimum', and 'asset disposal' were all discounted due to high risks, limited benefits, or lack of viability, while full re-stabilisation emerged as the only option meeting all criteria. This was refined through engineering assessment, with

soil nailing identified as the most effective and durable solution. Design development and public consultation led to two viable schemes – an Essential Option and a more balanced ‘New Option’ – that seek to optimise benefits while maintaining affordability. The case also highlights that the project requires significant upfront investment, with the use of capital reserves and the application of a grant to cover the remaining balance being the preferred funding options to carry forward. Overall, the Economic Case concludes that re-stabilisation using soil nails as part of the ‘New Option’ provides the strongest economic, social, and environmental outcomes, securing the long-term viability and value of the Green Seafront as a key community and tourism asset.

3. The Commercial Case

3.1 Commercial Case Summary

The Commercial Case outlines the emerging approach for procuring the professional services, technical design and construction works required to deliver the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. At this early Strategic Outline Business Case stage, the focus is on demonstrating that the market has the capability and capacity to deliver the complex stabilisation works and that suitable procurement routes exist to support a robust commercial structure.

A range of professional services is being brought together to support project development, including project management, technical planning, geotechnical and civil engineering, environmental advice, stakeholder engagement and commercial support. These services are being secured through a combination of existing Dorset Council frameworks, partnership arrangements and competitive quotations. Ensuring compliance, value for money and access to proven specialist expertise. As the project progresses, this blended approach will be refined to ensure the right skills are available for the developing design and procurement phases.

For the main stabilisation works, several procurement routes remain under consideration, including open tender, restricted procedure, framework call-off and competitive negotiation. A design and build contract is currently emerging as a strong potential option due to its ability to integrate design responsibility, manage geotechnical risk and provide a single point of accountability. However, the final approach will be confirmed following detailed market engagement at OBC stage, which will also inform commercial structuring, contract form, risk allocation and pricing mechanisms.

Overall, the commercial case demonstrates that a viable and competitive market exists, flexible procurement options are available, and the project is well positioned to move into further development. As expected at SOBC, the procurement strategy and contractual

arrangements will be further refined and formalised as the business case progresses toward Outline and Full Business Case stages.

3.2 Commercial Case Purpose

In this Strategic Outline Business Case, the purpose of the Commercial Case is to set out the initial view of how the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project could be procured and delivered through a viable commercial arrangement. At this early stage, the focus is on demonstrating that there is a credible supply base for the required ground-stabilisation works and that the project is likely to attract appropriate market interest.

The SOBC therefore outlines the emerging commercial principles: an initial understanding of the marketplace, the likely procurement routes and the types of services, outputs, and milestones that will need to be defined as the project develops. It also sets out early thinking on how risks across design, construction, and operational elements may be allocated between the public sector and suppliers to ensure value for money.

At the SOBC stage, this section does not finalise the procurement model or commercial structure. Instead, it provides a foundation that will be expanded and refined in the Outline Business Case, where procurement options are appraised and in the Final Business Case, where the preferred commercial deal, contract form and risk allocation are confirmed.

3.3 Market Assessment

The South of England has a well-developed market for coastal-protection, cliff-stabilisation and ground-engineering projects. Multiple recent tenders and completed works show that local authorities and infrastructure asset owners regularly procure stabilisation schemes along the southern coastline.

A recent example is the cliff-stabilisation scheme procured by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council covering engineering works to stabilise the eastern flank of the cliff around a former funicular railway site. This demonstrates that regional clients routinely procure geotechnical stabilisation works and that the supplier market is familiar with coastal-erosion challenges on the Dorset coastline.

Plans are advancing for £2.5 million of cliff-stabilisation and coastal defence works at Newtons Cove in Weymouth. The project involves strengthening the base of the cliff, renewing wall structures and addressing slope instability as part of a larger redevelopment supported by Dorset Council and Weymouth Town Council.

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Additionally, Dorset Council recently completed extensive stabilisation works on the River Stour embankment, where the bank was slipping and threatening the A357. The works included soil nail slope reinforcement, mesh installation and environmental restoration which is similar to the proposals for the Green Seafront. The project was delivered under challenging conditions demonstrating resilience, technical capability and effective public-sector collaboration.

When considered together, the stabilisation projects in BCP, Weymouth and Sturminster Newton demonstrate a mature and proven regional market with a consistent history of procuring and delivering complex stabilisation works.

Recent BCP projects required engineering within SSSI-designated cliffs and areas of ecological sensitivity, showing the market's ability to integrate conservation, ecological surveys, protected-species constraints and environmental restoration into project delivery.

The Sturminster Newton and cliff-stabilisation projects involved difficult ground conditions, constrained access, traffic management and weather impacts. This indicates that the regional market is familiar with the types of challenges likely to arise at a seafront ground-stabilisation site.

Based on verified recent activity the market shows a strong and proven ability to deliver the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project.

The region benefits from:

- A track record of major public-sector stabilisation schemes
- A skilled and active geotechnical and coastal-engineering supply chain
- Evidence of successful delivery in both coastal and inland stability settings
- Clear local-authority experience in managing tendering, environmental considerations and project oversight.

This gives high confidence at the SOBC stage that the market is fully capable of delivering the proposed seafront ground stabilisation works, with further refinement of the procurement strategy to follow at OBC stage.

3.4 Service Requirements & Outputs

The purpose of defining project requirements and outputs is to establish what Swanage Town Council will need to procure to deliver the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. The procurement will involve specialist professional services and construction delivery supported by early contractor involvement. These requirements will be refined and developed into full specifications at Outline Business Case (OBC) stage, forming the basis of tender documentation.

- **Project Management and Client Advisory:** Programme development and monitoring, budget and risk management, governance reporting and coordination of multidisciplinary inputs across Swanage Town Council, Dorset Council and statutory bodies, as well as supporting informed decision-making throughout the OBC, planning, and FBC stages.
- **Communications, Public and Stakeholder Engagement Support:** Ensuring clear project updates, manage expectations, gather local insight, address concerns, and build community support throughout planning and delivery of the Green Seafront project.
- **Geotechnical and Civil Engineering Services:** The project will require detailed ground investigations and confirmation of existing monitoring data, alongside slope-risk assessments, to inform the development of stabilisation design options and technical feasibility work. These activities will be supported by the preparation of technical reports for planning and procurement, and early pre-construction planning, including temporary works design and access arrangements.
- **Planning and Environmental Support:** Including preparing the necessary planning application documents such as design and access statements, environmental assessments, and ecological surveys. Provision of specialist surveys and advice on environmental requirements, ecological mitigation, biodiversity net gain and heritage considerations to ensure the project meets all regulatory and environmental obligations
- **Quantity Surveying and Cost Management:** Preparing detailed cost plans and lifecycle cost assessments, undertaking market testing and inflation analysis, producing bills of quantities and tender pricing schedules, and evaluating contractor submissions during procurement to ensure value for money and commercial robustness.
- **Procurement and Contract Support:** Developing tender documentation, evaluation frameworks, contract conditions, and employer's requirements, alongside providing specialist advice for the design-and-build delivery approach. This support will also include assisting with bid evaluation and commercial negotiations to ensure the Council appoints a competent contractor and secures a robust, value-for-money contract.
- **Detailed / Technical Design:** Develop the preferred stabilisation approach into a fully detailed and buildable solution that meets all safety, environmental, accessibility and lifecycle performance standards. This will include detailed geotechnical and structural engineering design, drainage improvements and specifications for any terraces, walls and reinstatement works. The design package will also provide full construction drawings, sequencing and CDM health-and-safety documentation, alongside environmental and ecological mitigation measures to achieve biodiversity net gain.

- **Construction and Handover:** The construction phase will deliver the approved stabilisation solution and complete all associated reinstatement, and enhancement works across the Green Seafront. This will include implementing ground-stabilisation measures, drainage upgrades, slope protection and all necessary temporary works, access arrangements, traffic management and site logistics. It will also reinstate terraces, pathways, grassed areas and public spaces, install upgraded utilities to support events and beach huts, restore the beach-hut structures and improve accessibility routes throughout the site.

Environmental obligations will be met through ecological mitigation, biodiversity-enhancing planting and wider landscape improvements. The contractor will be responsible for ensuring full compliance with planning conditions, environmental requirements and CDM regulations. They will also provide testing, commissioning, handover documentation, as-built records and maintenance information. The construction contract must be structured to ensure clear risk allocation, high-quality standards, robust safety management and adherence to the agreed programme.

3.5 Procurement Strategy & Route

At this Strategic Outline Business Case stage, the procurement strategy for the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project remains flexible, with several viable routes to market available. The intention is to refine and confirm the preferred procurement structure at the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage, once design development, risk allocation and market-engagement activities have progressed further. The procurement approach will ensure compliance with the Procurement Act 2023, achieve value for money and secure the specialist expertise required for the project.

A blended approach is being used for early-stage professional services, combining existing Dorset Council frameworks with competitive quotations, depending on the service area. This ensures continuity, efficient mobilisation and access to proven suppliers while maintaining transparency and value.

3.5.1 Project Management and Client Advisory

Project management, governance support and client-side advisory services are being provided by Dorset Council officers, accessed through established partnership arrangements and defined via a collaboration agreement with Dorset Council. This approach ensures access to experienced public-sector project delivery expertise without the need for a new procurement exercise.

3.5.2 Communications, Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Dorset Coast Forum was successful in securing the communications and engagement work due to their competitive pricing and experience supporting coastal and community-based programmes.

3.5.3 Geotechnical and Civil Engineering Consultancy

For early stage geotechnical and civil engineering services Swanage Town Council have used WSP Ltd. for site investigations, monitoring, concept design and technical reporting. This was procured via a competitive quotation methodology.

3.5.4 Planning Support

Planning support will be delivered through Dorset Council's Transport and Engineering Professional Services (TEPS) contract, providing access to specialist planning expertise needed to prepare and coordinate the necessary planning documentation, manage submissions, respond to planning authority queries and ensure the project progresses smoothly through the statutory planning process. This approach provides access to pre-procured multi-disciplinary support that has been established via competitive tender and benefits from the efficiencies of scale that this contract provides.

3.5.5 Environmental Support

Environmental support for the project is being delivered through specialist suppliers appointed via competitive quotations. LCES Ltd. has been engaged to undertake ecological surveys and provide biodiversity net gain advice, ensuring the project meets statutory ecological requirements and embeds appropriate mitigation measures. In addition, a local landscape architect has been commissioned, also through a competitive quotation process, to develop the soft-landscaping design, supporting ecological enhancement, visual quality, and long-term environmental resilience across the Green Seafront area.

3.5.6 Quantity Surveying and Cost Management (Early Contractor Involvement)

During the Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) stage, quantity surveying and cost-management inputs will be accessed through Dorset Council's existing Highways Term Service Contract, which provides pre-procured commercial expertise for early cost planning, risk review and market-inflation assessment.

3.5.7 Procurement and Contract Support

Procurement and contract support for the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project is expected to be provided through a combination of in-house expertise and access to externally procured professional services. The Council may utilise Dorset Council's Transport and Engineering Professional Services (TEPS) framework as one potential route for commercial and procurement support, including assistance with developing tender documentation, evaluation criteria, contract conditions and Employer's Requirements. This support would also help guide the Council through market engagement, bid evaluation and contract negotiation, ensuring a transparent and value-for-money process.

3.5.8 Detailed / Technical Design and Construction

The procurement route for the main stabilisation works has not yet been finalised. All standard routes remain viable and will be reviewed at OBC stage, including:

- **Open Tender Procedure:** A competitive market-wide procurement, suitable if high market interest is anticipated.
- **Restricted Procedure:** A two-stage route enabling selection of the most capable specialist bidders before detailed tendering.
- **Framework Call-Off:** Use of a national or regional civil engineering framework if appropriate scope and capacity exist.
- **Competitive Procedure with Negotiation:** Suitable if design complexity or market risk warrants iterative negotiation.
- **Design and Build Procurement:** Single contract for detailed design and construction, transferring design integration and construction-related risks to the contractor.

Given the ground conditions, technical risks and the need for clear accountability, the current emerging preference is a Design & Build (D&B) contract, as this provides:

- A single point of responsibility for integrating design and construction
- Better alignment of risk allocation, especially for geotechnical uncertainty
- Opportunities for buildability input during the detailed design stage
- Potential for improved programme certainty and cost control.

This preference will be tested with the market and evaluated against alternatives at the OBC stage.

3.5.9 Future Procurement Steps

As the project progresses toward the Outline Business Case, Swanage Town Council will undertake structured market engagement activities to better understand supplier capacity, interest and preferred delivery models, while also finalising the allocation of risks to inform the most appropriate contractual approach.

During this stage, the Council will develop the Employer's Requirements, pricing schedules and tender evaluation criteria, ensuring they provide a clear basis for competitive procurement. A key decision will be whether to adopt a design and build route or a traditional design then build approach.

Throughout this process, the procurement strategy will be aligned with the Council's wider financial strategy, any grant funding requirements and the overall programme constraints to ensure a deliverable, affordable and well-structured procurement pathway.

3.6 Risk Allocation

At this early stage, a detailed allocation of risks between Swanage Town Council and the market has not yet been finalised. As is typical at the SOBC stage, the approach to risk allocation will be refined through the forthcoming programme of market engagement.

Initial expectations are that design related, geotechnical and construction methodology risks may be more appropriately managed by a specialist contractor. Particularly if a design and build approach is adopted.

Strategic, planning, environmental and stakeholder related risks are likely to remain with the Council. Commercial, financial and programme risks will require joint assessment and negotiation during the Outline Business Case stage. Market engagement will therefore be used to understand supplier appetite, capacity and views on where specific risks should best sit, ensuring that the final allocation supports value for money, deliverability and appropriate transfer of responsibility. This iterative approach will enable the project to move toward a clear, balanced and commercially robust risk-allocation strategy as the business case develops.

3.7 Key Contractual Arrangements

At this Strategic Outline Case stage, the key contractual arrangements for the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project remain indicative and will be refined as the project moves toward the OBC. Current arrangements make use of existing Dorset Council frameworks and competitively procured specialist support to ensure early progress, continuity and value for money.

Professional services for project management and client advisory functions are being delivered by Dorset Council officers, while technical planning support is accessed through Dorset Council's Transport and Engineering Professional Services (TEPS) contract. Quantity surveying and cost-management input during Early Contractor Involvement is being provided through Dorset Council's existing Highways Term Service Contract. These elements of the project are enshrined in a collaboration agreement between Dorset Council and Swanage Town Council. This agreement is flexible and allows for additional schedules to be added as and when additional work requirements emerge that would be well suited to Dorset Council's existing contractual arrangements. An example of this is procurement support which is likely to be provided via the TEPS contract and will represent a new schedule to the collaboration agreement.

The principal contractual arrangement for the stabilisation works is expected to be a design and build contract, which is currently the preferred emerging route due to its ability to integrate design responsibility and manage geotechnical and construction risk more effectively. This contract form will be explored further through market engagement

and may be procured either via open competition, a restricted procedure, or an appropriate framework.

The final choice of contract model, risk allocation, and commercial structure will be confirmed at OBC stage following structured engagement with the market and further development of the Employer's Requirements.

3.8 Commercial Case Conclusion

In conclusion, the Commercial Case demonstrates that the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project is supported by a capable and experienced market, with established supply chains and procurement routes available to deliver both the professional services and construction works required. A pragmatic and flexible approach is being adopted at this stage, combining existing frameworks, partnership arrangements and competitive procurement to ensure early progress, value for money and access to specialist expertise. While the final procurement strategy, contract form and risk allocation will be refined at Outline Business Case stage, there is strong evidence that a design and build approach could provide an effective commercial structure, particularly in managing geotechnical complexity and ensuring clear accountability. Overall, the Commercial Case provides confidence that the project can be procured and delivered through a robust, competitive and commercially viable approach as it progresses through the next stages of development.

4. The Financial Case

4.1 Financial Case Summary

Key Messages – Financial Case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Option is not currently affordable without additional funding. • A funding gap of up to £2.5 million must be addressed to deliver the preferred option. • The Essential Option is close to being fully funded and is affordable within existing resources but does not deliver full range of benefits. • A range of income generation strategies have been assessed to support affordability, although there is insufficient income to fund the schemes from a revenue perspective • The Council is retaining flexibility by progressing both options in parallel

The Financial Case assesses the affordability and long-term sustainability of the two shortlisted options: the Essential Option and the New Option. It confirms that £4.4 million funding is currently available. Against estimated costs of £4.75 million (Essential) and £6.9 million (New), this results in a relatively modest funding gap of £350,000 for the Essential Option and a significant gap of £2.5 million for the New Option. As such, the Essential Option is considered broadly affordable within existing resources, while the New Option requires additional funding, such as external grants or borrowing.

To maintain flexibility, both options are being progressed in parallel. The New Option remains the preferred choice due to its wider economic and community benefits but is not yet financially viable.

Income generation is a key component of the financial model, with beach huts representing the primary revenue source. Three delivery approaches have been assessed: individual hut leases, rental, and a mixed model. Rental and mixed models provide ongoing revenue but depend on sustained demand. The New Option also introduces additional income streams, including a kiosk and event space.

Net Present Value analysis shows that while capital options perform better financially, differences between models are relatively small over the long term, and financial performance alone is not decisive. Revenue modelling highlights a trade-off between upfront capital receipts and ongoing income, with rental-based approaches supporting stronger long-term budgets.

Overall, the Financial Case concludes that affordability remains the key constraint, particularly for the New Option, and that securing additional funding is critical to delivering the preferred scheme.

4.2 Purpose of the Financial Case

The purpose of the Financial Case is to assess the affordability of the preferred option(s), confirm the availability of funding, and demonstrate that the proposed programme and its constituent projects are financially sustainable over their lifecycle.

In the Economic Case, two options were identified for further development: the Essential Option and the New Option. These options are taken forward for detailed financial appraisal.

4.3 Current Capital Funding Available and the Funding Gap

Key Messages – Funding and Affordability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total confirmed funding: £4.4 million Essential Option funding gap: £350,000 New Option funding gap: £2.5 million Additional funding may be available but is not yet confirmed A contingency approach is being applied due to inflation and economic uncertainty 	

Capital funding allocated to the project and held in reserves as of 31 March 2025 was £3.85 million. As of February 2026, confirmed funding available is detailed below. This assumes a construction start date of September 2027 for both options.

Funding Source	£
Capital Receipts Reserve	£1,700,000
Earmarked Reserves	£1,910,000
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Swanage Town Council	£290,000
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Dorset Council (<i>note 1</i>)	£500,000
Total	£4,400,000

Note 1 – Agreed by Dorset Council's CASM 19th March 2026 subject to Dorset Cabinet final approval on 21st April 2026.

The estimated capital costs of the schemes at the end of February 2026 are set out below:

	Essential Option	New Option
Cost of Scheme	£4,750,000	£6,900,000
Funding Available	£4,400,000	£4,400,000
Funding Gap	£350,000	£2,500,000

The £4,400,000 represents confirmed and committed funding. The Council anticipates that additional resources may become available, subject to year-end outturn positions and future budget-setting processes. A proportion of any additional funding will be

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allocated to a contingency reserve. This reflects a prudent approach to financial planning, given ongoing uncertainty in the international political environment, inflationary pressures, and wider macroeconomic risks that may impact construction costs and programme delivery.

From an affordability perspective, the Essential Option presents a relatively limited funding gap. By contrast, the New Option, while offering greater benefits (as set out in the Economic Case), presents a significant funding shortfall and would require the identification of additional funding sources.

The New Option is the Town Council's preferred option. However, at the time of writing, it is not fully funded. The Council is therefore progressing both options in parallel to maintain deliverability and flexibility. Securing external grant funding to support the New Option would significantly improve its affordability and remains a key objective.

In the absence of grant funding, the Council would need to determine an alternative course of action, such as giving further consideration to the sustainability of borrowing or rejecting the New Option and pursuing implementation of the Essential Option, despite it meeting a much smaller proportion of the Council's critical success factors. Any decision to borrow would be subject to a separate assessment of affordability, including the impact on revenue budgets and compliance with the Prudential Code. As borrowing has been ruled out as unaffordable at the current time, if required this would be addressed in the Outline Business Case.

In line with Green Book guidance, retaining the Essential Option as a viable alternative ensures that the stabilisation works remain deliverable under a range of funding scenarios. This provides resilience within the Financial Case and supports robust decision-making in a context of continued economic uncertainty.

4.4 Financial Model – Income Generation Options

Key Messages – Income Generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach huts are the primary income source across all options • Purpose of assessment of income generation is to weigh up long-term benefits of different options and not to assess whether these options can meet the funding gap • Three delivery models have been assessed: lease of huts, rental, and mixed • The mixed model provides the greatest flexibility • The New Option introduces additional income streams (kiosk and events) • Income projections include demand-related risks and are based on professional valuation advice

Beach huts represent the primary source of income for both the Essential Option and the New Option. Swanage Town Council currently operates a relatively distinctive business

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model, whereby beach huts are rented on a weekly basis for periods of up to one year. The Council considers that this approach supports the local visitor economy by encouraging short term stays and increasing visitor expenditure within the town.

By comparison, many local authorities adopt an alternative model, leasing beach huts over longer periods (typically up to 25 years). These differing approaches have materially different financial implications in terms of income profile, risk, and long-term revenue certainty. Both models are therefore considered within this Financial Case to assess their relative advantages and financial sustainability.

To inform the financial modelling, the Town Council has obtained independent professional advice from two sources regarding the valuation of beach huts under a leasehold disposal model (noting that the freehold interest would be retained by the Council). One advisor provided a national perspective, while the other offered specific insight into local market conditions. The valuation ranges provided by both parties were closely aligned, providing a robust and credible evidence base for the assumptions adopted within the financial model.

In addition to beach hut income, the New Option includes further income generating opportunities, notably through the provision of a kiosk and a small event space. At present, the Town Council derives minimal income from events, as it does not typically charge for their use of the Council's land and most revenue-generating events are held at alternative locations rather than Sandpit Field. It is therefore assumed that income generation under the Essential Option would remain limited in this regard.

The New Option, however, is expected to generate additional revenue through the hire of the proposed small event space for private and commercial functions. There is also potential to increase income through more structured and potentially more frequent use of the larger main event space for discrete private or commercial activities. These assumptions introduce an element of demand-related risk, which has been considered in the development of the financial model and will require ongoing monitoring as part of the project's operational phase.

Overall, the Financial Model reflects a range of income scenarios, taking into account the different delivery approaches, market evidence, and associated risks. This ensures that the assessment of affordability is based on prudent and evidence-based assumptions, in line with Green Book guidance.

4.5 Income Options Appraisal

Key Messages – Income Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease of huts and mixed models (1 and 3) balance capital receipts with ongoing revenue • Rental model provides stable income but relies on sustained demand

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- Financial differences between options are relatively small over the long term
- Non-financial factors (control, flexibility, risk) are critical in decision-making

The following is an analysis of the different revenue options.

Option 1: Sale (lease) all beach huts individually over a period of time		
Description	This option would see the gradual sale on the open market of individual beach huts over a period of 5 to 6 years. In this option, beach hut leases would be 25 years. It is assumed that beach huts would be rented out by the Council in the lead up to sale in order to maximise income generation. The owners would be required to undertake all future maintenance of the hut and to keep it in good repair according to the terms of the legal arrangements in place.	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gradual sale will ensure that higher prices are paid for each hut, otherwise a flooded market will see demand drop • A ground rent would likely be applied to cover the cost of grounds maintenance and to service the communal areas • A more staggered approach to rental and sale would enable the Council to better respond to market forces and ensure flexibility around the future sales strategy 	
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council would ultimately lose control of the area • The Council would continue to undertake grounds maintenance and service the communal areas 	
Financial assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuation based on 2025-26 prices • Costs include legal, estate agents and marketing • Ground rent of £250 per hut is paid to the Council to cover grounds maintenance 	
Indicative capital/revenue implications	Essential – Capital	New Option – Capital
	Year 1 – £239,500 (10 sold) Year 2 – £239,500 (10 sold) Year 3 – £239,500 (10 sold) Year 4 – £215,500 (9 sold) Year 5 – £0 Year 6 – £0	Year 1 – £279,000 (10 sold) Year 2 – £279,000 (10 sold) Year 3 – £279,000 (10 sold) Year 4 – £279,000 (10 sold) Year 5 – £167,500 (6 sold) Year 6 – £0
Conclusions	This option provides an element of flexibility and retains core ownership and control over elements of the site. The income strategy could respond more effectively to market demand, if beach huts are either more or less popular on the open market	
Carry forward	Yes	

Option 2: Rent beach huts

Description	This option is a continuation of the current commercial model used by the Council for the Shore Road huts.
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Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tried and tested system that would have relatively minimal impact on the current service (i.e. admin, booking systems etc already in place) • Can be used very quickly as soon as huts are available 	
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the current beach huts are incredibly popular with over 85%+ occupancy, there may be insufficient market demand to match this level of occupancy in the years immediately after construction • A marketing budget will need to be utilised to develop market demand 	
Financial assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A similar level to current occupancy rates on Shore Road has been assumed – this may take a few years to achieve this (or introductory prices in the first few years which could impact on the figures) • Based on 2025-26 prices • Beach hut costs include advertising, electric, materials, cleaning, merchant fees, repairs and maintenance and depreciation. The largest cost is business rates which was £58,000 in 2025-26 for 60 Shore Road beach huts. • Rental beach huts incur VAT of 20% 	
Indicative capital/revenue implications	Essential – Revenue	New Option – Revenue
	£57,500	£78,000
Conclusions	It is considered unlikely that there is sufficient demand locally to fill all the huts in the short term, although a strong marketing campaign could mitigate this to some extent.	
Carry forward	Yes	

Option 3: Mix of rental and sale (lease)	
Description	This commercial strategy would see a planned approach to leasing a set number of beach huts for 25 years over a relatively short period of time and rental for the remaining huts.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear strategy would maximise income from both sale and rental • A combination of up-front capital payments for beach hut sales and annual revenue from rentals, which can be adjusted according to market demand • A tried and tested rental system that would have relatively little impact on the current service (i.e. admin, booking systems etc) • Can be used very quickly as soon as huts are available
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of control over beach hut sales • A marketing budget will need to be utilised to develop market demand

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Financial assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above for sale and rental assumptions • Other assumptions the same as options two and three above • Rental based on 2025-26 prices and use current Spa/Shore huts as a baseline 	
Indicative capital/revenue implications	Essential – Capital/Revenue	New Option – Capital/Revenue
	Year 1 – £169,500 (5 sold) Year 2 – £169,500 (5 sold) Year 3 – £46,500 Year 4 – £46,500 Year 5 – £46,500	Year 1 – £245,000 (5 sold) Year 2 – £245,000 (5 sold) Year 3 – £56,500 Year 4 – £56,500 Year 5 – £56,500
Conclusions	This option provides perhaps the greatest level of flexibility to meet market demands.	
Carry forward	Yes	

The following options relate only to the New Option and have been included in all the following financial models for this option.

New Option Only – Kiosk		
Description	The commercial model proposed is to lease out the space in the Plaza to a single catering concession or similar. This will be subject to a competitive tender exercise. The successful bidder will be offered a concession for a fixed period of time.	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue income to the Council each year • Limited administration overhead for the Council • Tender process should ensure that the design, look and feel of the concession meets the needs of the Council • A kiosk has been in or near to this location for many years (from the 1920s until 2022) 	
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of some control by the Council 	
Financial assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income assumptions based on market testing 	
Indicative capital/revenue implications	Essential	New Option – Revenue
	£0	£20,000
Conclusions	There is a precedent for a catering or similar facility at this location.	
Carry forward	Yes	

New Option Only: Small Event Space	
Description	The small event space will be designed to enable small daytime private gatherings. With the stunning views, this would make a suitable space for small parties, wedding celebrations and similar activities. The potential of using the main event field for discrete private events exists but is considered marginal.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A useful space that will generate additional revenue

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Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively small level of income generation, depending on how attractive the site is for higher value activities such as weddings Potential nuisance for those living nearby would need to be managed effectively 	
Financial assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes only a relatively small amount of use as it is difficult to estimate how popular such a space might be 	
Indicative capital/revenue implications	Essential	New Option – Revenue
	£0	£10,000
Conclusions	A relatively low amount of income has been suggested for this option as it will depend on several factors including market demand and final design	
Carry forward	Yes	

The two tables below provide the figures from the income options above in a summary manner. This demonstrates the challenges of comparing very different capital and revenue models.

Essential Option Income: Capital receipts / surplus generated			
Year	Lease 25 yr	Rental	Mixed lease/rent
1	£239,500	£57,500	£169,500
2	£239,500	£57,500	£169,500
3	£239,500	£57,500	£46,500
4	£215,500	£57,500	£46,500
5	£0	£57,500	£46,500
6	£0	£57,500	£46,500

New Option Income: Capital receipts / surplus generated			
Year	Lease 25 yr	Rental	Mixed lease/rent
1	£279,000	£78,000	£245,000
2	£279,000	£78,000	£245,000
3	£279,000	£78,000	£56,500
4	£279,000	£78,000	£56,500
5	£167,500	£78,000	£56,500
6	£0	£78,000	£56,500

4.6 Comparison of different models: Income and Expenditure

Key Messages – Revenue Implications

- Financial performance is not a deciding factor – differences between options are marginal
- Capital vs income is the key trade-off – upfront receipts versus long-term revenue stability
- Using reserves has a real cost – around £150k per year in lost investment income, but capital receipt could partially offset this loss
- Both options generate insufficient income to fully mitigate the lost investment income
- Maintenance and operational costs will increase compared to baseline

A review of the financial model has been undertaken to assess the relative performance of the proposed options for the Swanage Green Seafront project. The analysis considers both capital and revenue implications over the long term, including Net Present Value (NPV), ongoing income generation, and the opportunity cost of Council investment.

The NPV analysis indicates that options which generate higher upfront capital receipts perform marginally better in financial terms. However, the differences between options are relatively small over the appraisal period. As a result, financial performance alone is not a decisive factor in determining the preferred option.

This finding reinforces the need to consider wider strategic, economic, and social objectives alongside financial outcomes when selecting a preferred approach.

The revenue modelling highlights a clear trade-off between:

- Upfront capital receipts, typically associated with disposal or capital-led options
- Ongoing revenue income, particularly through rental-based models.

While capital-led options can provide an immediate financial benefit, rental-based approaches offer stronger and more sustainable income streams over the long term. These recurring revenues are particularly important in supporting the Council's medium- to long-term financial position.

An important consideration within the financial assessment is the opportunity cost of using Council reserves to fund the project.

The Council currently generates approximately £150,000 per annum in investment income from the funds that would be allocated to the scheme. Using these reserves therefore results in a loss of this income, which must be considered when evaluating affordability and overall financial impact.

At this Strategic Outline Business Case stage, it is not proportionate to undertake detailed financial modelling for all income options. However, to demonstrate the potential financial impact of the scheme, the rental-based option has been modelled in detail.

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The baseline position reflects the current use of the site, specifically the 14 beach huts at the Spa, which are rented on a weekly basis.

Income Activity	Baseline	Essential	New Option
		Rent all beach huts	Rent all beach huts
Beach Hut income	£31,500	£101,500	£138,750
Other income	£0	£0	£30,000
Sub-Total	£31,500	£101,500	£168,750
Investment income	£150,000	£0	£0
Total	£181,500	£101,500	£168,750

This analysis demonstrates that:

- The baseline position benefits significantly from investment income, which would be foregone if reserves are used.
- The Essential option improves operational income but does not fully offset the loss of investment returns.
- The New Option generates substantially higher operational income, narrowing the gap and improving long-term revenue sustainability.

In addition to income, the financial model considers the ongoing operational and maintenance costs associated with each option.

The expenditure figures presented below are based on the 2025-26 financial year and should be interpreted as average annual costs, recognising that some expenditures (particularly maintenance) may vary year to year.

The baseline excludes costs associated with land slippage works, as this option has already been discounted. It is retained here solely to provide a comparison against the current Council budget position.

Expenditure Activity	Baseline	Essential	New Option
		Rent all beach huts	Rent all beach huts
Beach huts expenditure (1)	£9,750	£44,500	£60,750
Toilets (2)	£0	0	£15,000
Maintenance (paths etc) (3)		£5,000	£10,000
Grounds Maintenance (4)		£2,500	£5,000
Monitoring (5)	£20,000	£0	£0

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Total	£29,750	£52,000	£90,750
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Notes

1 – Includes business rates, cleaning, repairs and maintenance etc

2 – In all options, it is assumed that Battlegate Toilets on Shore Road will remain open and therefore the only additional revenue cost for toilets relates to the New Option.

3 – Additional paths and infrastructure in both options compared to baseline.

4 – Additional plantings on both options (to support the required 10% biodiversity net gain) will require additional costs, although low maintenance plantings will be utilised as far as feasible

5 – Monitoring will not be required once the stabilisation is undertaken

This analysis demonstrates that:

- The baseline position incurs high monitoring costs, which would be removed once the work is undertaken
- The Essential option incurs a marginally higher expenditure compared to the baseline.
- The New Option generates substantially higher operational expenditure.

4.7 The Financial Revenue Model Summary

Key Messages – Financial Summary	
•	Both options represent a decrease in the Council's net revenue position ranging from £102,250 to £73,750. This is the additional amount of annual funding the Council will need to find to support the schemes
•	The New Option provides a reduced impact on the annual revenue budget when compared to the Essential Option.
•	Borrowing would have a significant annual revenue impact (~£200,000)
•	Long-term affordability is sensitive to inflation and income assumptions

The expenditure and income figures from the various tables above are shown below.

	Baseline	Essential	New Option
		Rent all beach huts	Rent all beach huts
Total Expenditure	£29,750	£52,000	£90,750
Total Income	£31,500	£101,500	£168,750
Net Position	£1,750	£49,500	£78,000
Investment income	£150,000	£0	£0
Surplus /(Deficit)	£151,750	£49,500	£78,000
Difference to Baseline	£0	-£102,250	-£73,750

At this stage, it is assumed that the funding gap will be met through external grant funding. Should this not be achieved, borrowing may be required.

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Indicatively, borrowing £2.5 million at 6.45% over 25 years would result in annual repayments of approximately £200,000 (PWLB calculation 27th March 2026). This would have a significant impact on the Council's revenue budget and would require careful consideration.

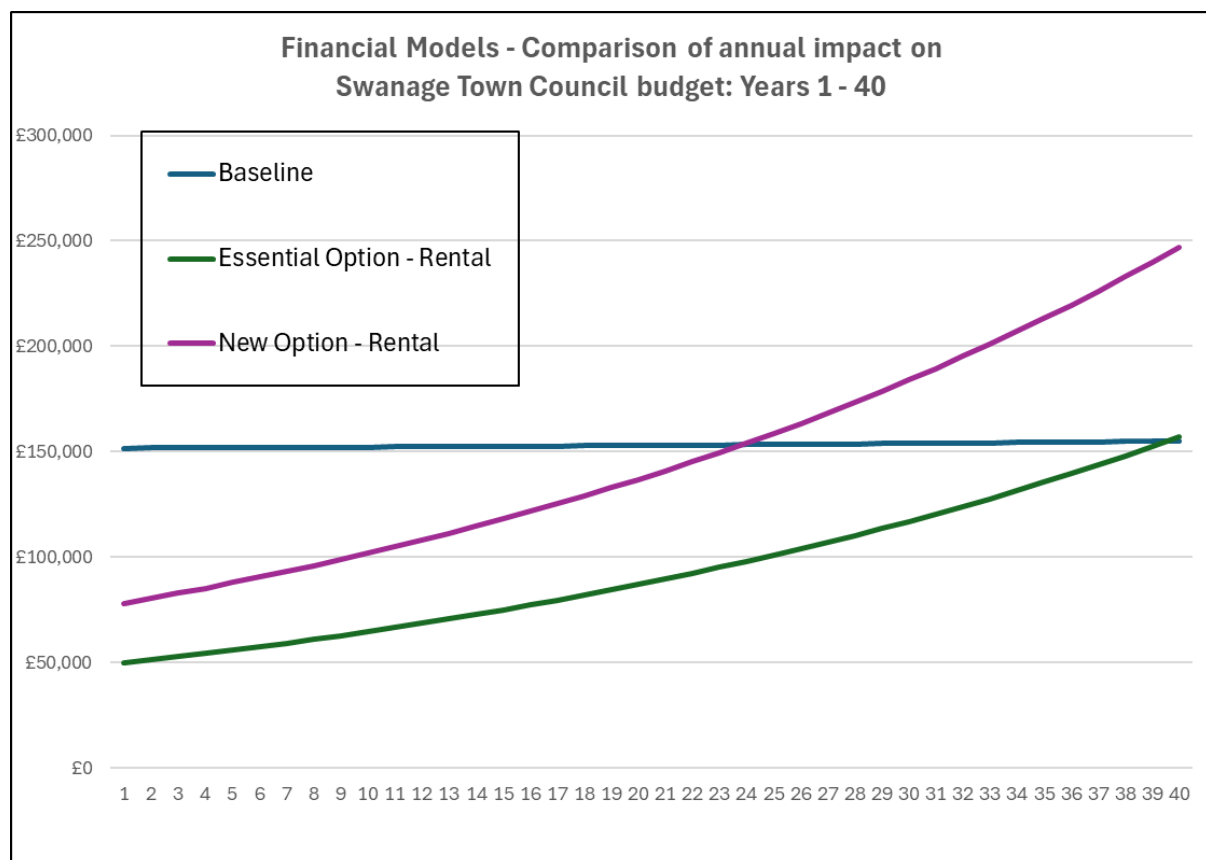
When income and expenditure are considered together, the analysis indicates that the New Option delivers the highest income potential but also incurs higher operating costs, reflecting increased activity and improved facilities.

Overall, while capital options may offer stronger immediate financial returns, rental-based options provide more resilient, long-term revenue streams, albeit with higher operating commitments.

Long-term modelling (over 40 years) indicates that financial performance is sensitive to assumptions around inflation, income growth, and investment returns.

While the option to dispose of the whole Spa beach hut site post implementation has been removed at the current time from the project (see option 8 in section 2.5.1), this option could be reconsidered at the OBC/FBC stage.

The graph below provides an overview of the long-term impact on the Council's budget for the different models.



Assumptions within the graph data

1. Inflation on expenditure (3%), income (3%)

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2. Assumes 'funding gap' is grant funded at no cost

The graph compares three financial models and their projected annual impact on the Council budget over 40 years. Most models remain relatively stable or grow slowly, but the 'New Option – Rental' model shows a steep and continuous rise, reaching close to £300,000 by year 40. The 'Essential – Rental' model also increases over time, though at a more moderate rate.

Therefore, the New Option provides the most advantageous financial position for the Council compared to the Essential Option however other factors such as strategic, economic, and social objectives, should be considered.

4.8 Indirect costs and opportunities

Key Messages – Wider Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme supports the local visitor economy • Even a 1% increase in visitor spend in Swanage = ~£770,000 annually • Wider economic benefits strengthen the case for the New Option

The scheme is expected to support and enhance the local visitor economy. The New Option, in particular, is anticipated to increase visitor numbers by providing additional and more diverse seafront space.

Even a modest increase in visitor expenditure would bring significant benefits to the local economy. For example, a 1% increase in spend would equate to £770,000 per annum (2024 'South West Tourism' figures for Swanage).

Additional benefits include:

- Increased car parking income
- Greater off-season economic activity through events
- Broader appeal to different visitor groups

These wider economic impacts are not fully captured within the Financial Case but are reflected in the Economic Case.

No significant indirect financial costs have been identified beyond those already captured within the appraisal.

4.9 Financial Case Conclusion

From a financial perspective and assuming that the Council are successful in obtaining grant funding, the 'New Option' is considered to offer a more advantageous long-term position for the Council when compared to the 'Essential Option'. While the Essential Option requires little additional capital investment, it involves relatively high costs to

replace like for like infrastructure, delivers limited opportunity for income growth and fails to improve the site for the community and enhance the local economy. In contrast, the New Option requires an additional capital investment compared to the Essential Option, but this enables a broader range of revenue-generating opportunities, reduces pressure on the Council's annual revenue budget, and supports a faster recovery to pre-scheme income levels.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the Financial Case highlights several important risks and constraints. The use of existing reserves to fund either option would significantly deplete the Council's capital reserves, limiting its ability to support future community projects and priorities. In addition, utilising reserves results in the loss of investment income currently generated from these funds, and neither option generates sufficient income to fully mitigate this. This represents a material opportunity cost. Income projections within the model are inherently demand-driven and therefore subject to uncertainty, particularly in the early years of operation. Furthermore, prudential borrowing has been assessed and is not considered affordable at this time due to the significant and ongoing impact it would have on the Council's revenue budget. As such, securing external funding remains critical to the delivery of the preferred New Option, while retaining the Essential Option ensures that a deliverable scheme can still be progressed if additional funding is not secured.

5. The Management Case

5.1 Management Case Summary

The Management Case outlines the emerging arrangements that will support the effective delivery of the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. As this is the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC), the focus is on providing assurance that the project is deliverable in principle, with more detailed planning to follow at Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) stages.

A clear governance structure is already in place, including a designated Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and defined reporting mechanisms to Swanage Town Council. An initial programme has been developed, targeting construction between September 2027 and April 2028 to minimise disruption during peak visitor periods.

To supplement internal capacity, Swanage Town Council has entered into a Collaboration Agreement with Dorset Council, enabling access to pre-procured technical, project management, planning and early contractor involvement support. Additional services will be procured directly where required, with a design-and-build contract expected to be competitively tendered.

The Management Case includes high-level arrangements for change management, risk management and programme assurance, all aligned with Treasury guidance. A preliminary risk register has been developed, informed by technical work, audit findings and councillor workshops. Post-project appraisal will assess delivery performance, benefits realisation and lessons for future coastal projects.

5.2 Purpose of the Management Case

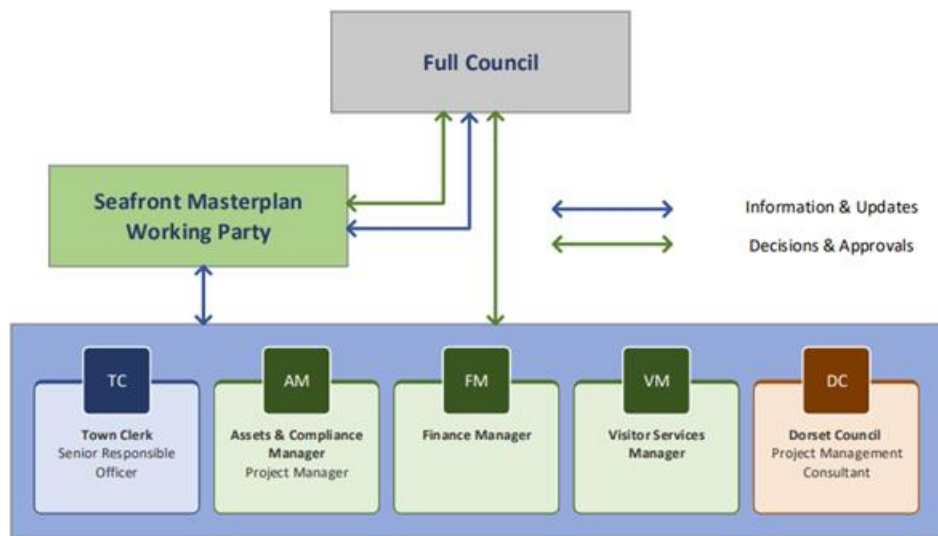
The purpose of the Management Case is to demonstrate that robust, practical, and proportionate delivery arrangements are in place to support the successful implementation of the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. As this document represents the Strategic Outline Business Case, the level of detail provided at this stage is necessarily high-level and focuses on establishing confidence that the project is deliverable in principle.

This Case outlines the emerging governance structures, delivery approach, programme management arrangements, assurance processes, risk management framework, and initial plans for monitoring, reporting, and benefits realisation. These elements will be developed in greater depth as the project progresses, with more detailed proposals and refined controls to be presented in the subsequent Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC). Together, these evolving arrangements will ensure that the project can be delivered effectively, on time, and within the approved scope and budget.

5.3 Governance

The Green Seafront Project Team has established a clear and robust governance framework to oversee project development and delivery. A designated Senior Responsible Officer is in place, supported by defined reporting arrangements to elected members and other key decision-makers. The governance structure set out below will be used to guide, monitor, and assure delivery throughout the lifecycle of the project. This framework was formally adopted by Swanage Town Council at its meeting on 15 December 2025.

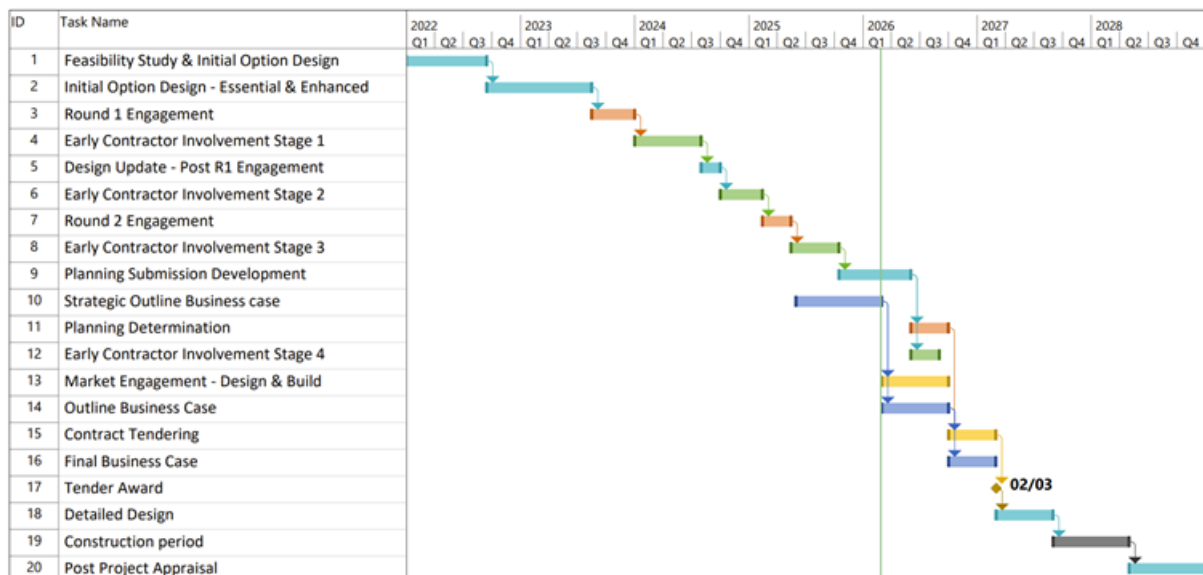
Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project Governance Structure



Governance Structure Flow Diagram

5.4 Project Programme

The outline project programme below sets out the anticipated timeline for developing and delivering the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. It will be refined as the project progresses. Current programme aims for construction to take place between September 2027 and April 2028, aligning activity with reduced visitor numbers and events.



Project Programme Gantt Chart Timeline

5.5 External Support

Swanage Town Council has entered into a Collaboration Agreement with Dorset Council to provide access to external technical and professional support for the Green Seafront

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Ground Stabilisation Project. The Agreement establishes a clear and compliant framework through which the Town Council can draw upon Dorset Council's pre-procured providers who have been appointed through competitive tenders. These providers will deliver specialist services required for the project. This approach ensures value for money, transparency and clarity over roles, responsibilities, and terms of engagement.

The Collaboration Agreement includes defined schedules covering specific areas of support with the flexibility to add further schedules as the project progresses and delivery requirements become clearer:

- **Schedule 1 – Project Management Support:** enables the Town Council to access specialist project management expertise from Dorset Council to oversee development and delivery of the scheme.
- **Schedule 2 – Early Contractor Involvement (ECI):** provides for cost plan development and review, construction programme input, buildability assessments, value engineering opportunities and the preparation of a construction risk register.
- **Schedule 3 – Professional Services for Planning:** provides access to technical specialists required to support planning applications for the essential works and the wider Green Seafront options.

Further schedules to the collaboration agreement are expected for procurement support. This is necessary to ensure that the procurement approach is legally compliant and will deliver value for money to the Council.

In addition to support accessed through the Collaboration Agreement, the Town Council has procured and will continue to procure, services directly where necessary to support the development and delivery of the project.

At this stage of project development, it is anticipated that a design-and-build contract will be procured through an open market tender undertaken by Swanage Town Council, rather than through existing contractual arrangements held by Dorset Council. (See Section 3 – Commercial Case).

5.6 Change Management

Effective change management is essential to ensure the successful delivery of the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project, particularly given the complexity of the site, technical requirements and the need for coordination between Swanage Town Council, Dorset Council, contractors and the wider stakeholder community.

At this SOBC stage, high-level arrangements have been identified to ensure that any proposed changes to scope, cost, schedule, risk profile, or project outcomes are

managed in a transparent, controlled and auditable manner. These arrangements will be further developed and formalised in the Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) as the project design matures and delivery planning becomes more detailed.

Key elements of the emerging change management approach include:

- **Clear Governance Pathways:** The project governance structure will define approval thresholds for changes, with minor changes managed by the project team and significant changes escalated to the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) or Full Council as appropriate.
- **Structured Change Control Process:** All change requests will be captured, logged, impact-assessed and reviewed through a formal Change Control Register. Impacts on cost, schedule, risk, quality, and benefits will be considered before any change is approved.
- **Integration with Risk and Programme Management:** Changes will be assessed alongside the project risk register and delivery programme to ensure alignment, avoid unintended consequences and maintain overall project integrity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Changes with implications for external stakeholders including residents, businesses, statutory bodies, and environmental stakeholders will be communicated proactively and managed in line with the project's communications and engagement plan.
- **Contractual and Procurement Alignment:** Changes arising from Early Contractor Involvement (ECI), technical findings, or planning requirements will be integrated into the project and related procurement activities to ensure clarity and compliance.

As the project progresses, the Change Management Plan will be expanded to include construction delivery phases. This will ensure that the project remains controlled, adaptable and able to respond effectively to new information and emerging risks while maintaining value for money and delivery confidence.

5.7 Benefits Realisation

The Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project is expected to deliver a range of economic, environmental and operational benefits for Swanage. At this Strategic Outline Business Case stage, the benefits framework is high-level and indicative. It provides confidence that the project has a clear line of sight between its objectives, the problems it seeks to address and the outcomes it aims to achieve. A further developed Benefits Realisation Plan will be produced at the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage and refined further for the Full Business Case (FBC).

The benefits of this project are identified at section 1.4.2.

A structured approach to benefits realisation will be put in place as part of the OBC and will include:

- **A Benefits Register** identifying each benefit, its owner, measurement method, baseline, and target.
- **Clear benefit ownership** assigned to accountable individuals within the Council.
- **Monitoring and reporting** arrangements integrated with the project governance structure.
- **Post-Project Appraisal** at appropriate intervals to confirm whether benefits have been achieved and to inform future coastal projects.

At this stage, the benefits outlined provide assurance that the project aligns strongly with strategic objectives and will generate meaningful, measurable outcomes once fully implemented.

5.8 Risk Management

Effective risk management is essential to ensuring the safe, timely, and cost-efficient delivery of the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. The project will adopt a structured and proportionate approach in line with HM Treasury's Orange Book: Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (2023) and consistent with Swanage Town Council's existing risk management framework.

At this SOBC stage, a high-level risk management approach has been established. This will be further developed at Outline Business Case (OBC) stage into a Risk Management Plan. The emerging approach includes:

5.8.1 Risk Identification

Risks have been identified through:

- Technical assessments undertaken during early feasibility work.
- Audit findings from a previous related coastal project.
- A dedicated councillor risk workshop, which highlighted political, reputational, and funding-related risks.
- Early Contractor Involvement (ECI).
- Professional input from specialists and external consultants.

These activities ensure that the risk register reflects diverse perspectives, including operational, financial, strategic, environmental, and stakeholder considerations.

5.8.2 Risk Analysis and Categorisation

Risks are assessed using a standardised scoring methodology to determine likelihood and impact across:

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- Cost
- Time
- Scope/quality
- Health and safety
- Environmental impact
- Reputational consequence

This enables prioritisation of risks and helps target mitigation effort where it delivers most value.

5.8.3 Risk Mitigation and Controls

Each risk will be assigned:

- A risk owner responsible for monitoring and implementing controls
- Clear mitigation measures, including design interventions, planning controls, contractor methodologies, community engagement, and contingency planning
- Action plans that are reviewed and updated at key project milestones

Mitigation will be integrated with programme management, cost planning and design development to ensure a coherent approach.

5.8.4 Risk Monitoring and Reporting

Risk management will be embedded within project governance through:

- Standing agenda items at Project Team meetings.
- Monthly updates to the Risk Register.
- Escalation routes based on risk thresholds and tolerances.
- Integration with the project's Change Control process.

Significant or emerging risks will be escalated to the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Swanage Town Council where required.

5.8.5 Contingency and Optimism Bias

In accordance with Treasury guidance, an allowance for optimism bias will be applied at this stage and refined as risks are better understood at OBC and FBC. This process will be informed by the findings of the earlier audit and the lessons captured from the councillor risk session.

5.8.6 Assurance and Independent Review

Risk management will form a core component of internal and external assurance, including:

- Peer review of risk assessments.

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- Technical assurance of ground engineering risks.
- Review of risk and contingency as part of OBC/FBC gateway checks.

These mechanisms will support confidence in cost estimates, programme robustness, and project deliverability.

5.8.7 Risk Register

A Risk Register has been completed for this SOBC, with the top risks identified earlier in this document: [Key Risk Register Considerations](#). It summarises:

- Key strategic and delivery risks
- Preliminary scoring and prioritisation
- Early-stage mitigation measures
- Key risk owners

5.9 Programme Assurance

Robust programme assurance and systematic evaluation are essential to providing confidence that the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project will be delivered effectively, meets its stated objectives and offers value for money. At this Strategic Outline Business Case stage, the assurance and evaluation approach is set out at a high level and will be further developed at the Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) stages.

Programme assurance will operate at multiple levels to ensure independent scrutiny, informed decision making, and alignment with HM Treasury and Swanage Town Council governance requirements. The key elements of the emerging assurance framework include:

- **Internal Governance Assurance:** Regular oversight by the Project Team, Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and STC Full Council through structured reporting, risk review and monitoring of progress against programme, budget, and scope.
- **Technical and Professional Assurance:** Independent technical review of geotechnical design, construction methodology, ground stabilisation solutions, and safety management by appropriately qualified specialists. This may be delivered through Dorset Council professional services, third-party specialists, or peer review.
- **Gateway and Business Case Assurance:** Assurance checkpoints will be aligned to the development of the OBC and FBC, ensuring that the project remains deliverable, affordable and aligned with strategic objectives. This includes scrutiny of procurement approach, risk management, cost estimates and value for money considerations.

- **Audit and Lessons Learned:** Findings from the audit report of the Phase 1 Stabilisation Project, along with recommendations arising from Councillor Risk Meetings, will form part of the assurance baseline and inform future mitigation, governance refinements and decision making.

5.10 Post Project Appraisal

Effective post project evaluation is crucial to confirming whether the investment has delivered its anticipated benefits and to capturing lessons that will influence future Swanage Town Council projects.

At this SOBC stage, the approach is high level and will be expanded at OBC to define clear metrics, baselines, evaluation methods, and responsibilities.

The emerging evaluation approach includes:

- **Post Implementation Review:** Conducted shortly after construction completion, assessing whether the project was delivered as planned, including compliance with programme, budget, quality standards, safety requirements and stakeholder expectations.
- **Benefits Realisation Evaluation:** Assessment of the achievement of planned benefits, including improvements in ground stability, protection of infrastructure, reduced maintenance liabilities and growth of Swanage's economy. This will draw on the Benefits Register that will be fully developed at OBC stage.
- **Learning for Future Projects:** Key lessons from design, procurement, community engagement, construction and risk management will be captured in a structured lessons learned report, informing future infrastructure investment projects.

5.11 Management Case Conclusion

In conclusion, the Management Case demonstrates that robust and proportionate delivery arrangements are in place to support the successful implementation of the Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation Project. Clear governance structures, an established programme, and access to experienced external support through the Collaboration Agreement provide a strong foundation for delivery, while emerging frameworks for risk management, change control, and programme assurance ensure that the project will be effectively monitored and managed. Although these arrangements are necessarily high-level at the SOBC stage, they provide confidence that the project is deliverable in principle and capable of being developed into a fully controlled and assured programme. As the project progresses to Outline and Full Business Case stages, these management processes will be further refined to ensure the project is delivered on time, within budget, and in line with its intended outcomes and benefits.

Appendix A: Links to key supporting documents

Swanage Town Council Project Webpage

Green Seafront Scheme Overview

Primary page for the stabilisation project, including background, identified defects, aims, options, and links to technical reports.

www.swanage.gov.uk/green-seafront-scheme

List of All Technical Reports

Geotechnical assessments and methodology reviews, including: WSP feasibility study (2022), Heidelberg Materials engineering review and WSP site monitoring reports (2023–2025).

www.swanage.gov.uk/green-seafront-scheme (scroll to “Technical Reports”)

Dorset Coast Forum Project Webpage

Project Overview

Overview of Key updates and Frequently Asked Questions, linking to other more detailed information.

www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/swanage-green-seafront-stabilisation

Background Information

Establishes why the works are needed.

[Background Information | Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation & Shore Road Enhancement Scheme | Dorset Coast Have Your Say](#)

Project Updates and Engagement Timeline

Provides an overview of the project development and engagement throughout.

[Project Updates | Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation & Shore Road Enhancement Scheme | Dorset Coast Have Your Say](#)

Swanage Town Council Swanage Seafront Masterplan

Seafront Masterplan

Evidence on coastal condition, land stability, public space usage, access, heritage, and environmental constraints, and sets out a series of site-specific proposals and design

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principles for the future management and improvement of the seafront (adopted July 2023).

www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/swanage-seafront-masterplan

Dorset Coast Forum Seafront Masterplan Public Engagement

Consultation materials, survey findings, amendments, Phase 1 & 2 engagement records.

<https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/swanage-seafront-masterplan>

Other Coastal Related Schemes in Swanage

Swanage Town Coastal Protection Scheme

Broader flood and erosion risk management proposals including Shore Road, Mowlem area and High Street.

www.dorsetcoast.com/project/swanage-town-coastal-protection-scheme

(via Swanage Town Council Seafront Enhancements page)

<https://www.swanage.gov.uk/SeafrontEnhancements>

Swanage Coastal Management Schemes

Includes Beach Recharge, Durlston Bay Cliffs, North Cliff projects (and the Swanage Beach Management Plan).

www.dorsetcoast.com/project/swanage-coastal-management-schemes/

North Swanage – Adapting to Coastal Change (Future Coast project)

Public engagement information and trial adaptation measures.

www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/futurecoast-swanage

Appendix B: Green Seafront Options – Scoring Table

Green Seafront Options		Upfront Capital Cost	Improve/ maintain quality	Support and improve Swanage economy	Improve delivery of services	Reduce cost of service provision	Meeting statutory & regulatory compliance	Total Qualitative Score	Weighted Score		
									40%	60%	100%
1	Do nothing	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	40%	0%	40%
2	Asset Disposal	2	2	2	2	5	2	13	20%	31%	51%
3	Do Minimum	3	1	1	1	0	2	5	30%	12%	42%
4	Re-stabilisation	1	5	5	5	5	5	25	10%	60%	70%
4.1	Slope Regrading	2	2	2	2	5	5	16	27%	38%	65%
4.2	Sheet Piles	1	3	3	3	1	5	15	10%	36%	46%
4.3	Soil Nails	3	5	5	4	5	5	24	30%	58%	88%
4.3a	Essential Option	3	2	2	2	5	5	16	40%	38%	78%
4.3b	Enhanced Option	1	5	5	5	4	5	24	13%	58%	71%
4.3c	New Option	2	5	5	5	4	5	24	27%	58%	84%

Major Concern	0
Unsatisfactory	1
Acceptable	2
Satisfactory	3
Good	4
Excellent	5

From a total of:

Finance	40%	4
Quality	60%	25

Cost ranking

Highest	1
Middle high	2
Middle low	3
Lowest	4

Appendix C: Tourism Data (2022-2024)

	2022	2023	2024
UK staying trips	135,000	114,000	107,800
UK staying nights	546,800	453,500	438,500
UK staying spend	£32,412,600	£28,398,800	£26,175,000
Overseas staying trips	9,300	8,900	8,900
Overseas staying nights	83,000	95,500	89,600
Overseas staying spend	£6,250,500	£6,198,600	£6,337,900
Total staying trips	144,300	122,900	116,700
Total staying nights	629,800	549,000	528,100
Total staying spend	£38,663,100	£34,597,400	£32,512,900
Day visit	781,200	806,700	786,900
Day visit spend	£27,883,300	£34,339,600	£35,928,400
Total direct spend	£66,546,400	£68,937,000	£68,441,300
Total business turnover	£74,575,900	£77,386,100	£76,095,900
FTE employment	767	750	644
Actual employment	1,058	1,035	885
Day plus staying	925,500	929,600	903,600