



Sandbanks Dune Management Study

**Consultation on Draft Sand Dunes
Management Approach at Sandbanks**

Supplementary Document



1. Introduction

This is a supplementary document with supporting information for the Sandbanks Sand Dunes Consultation that BCP Council is running from **16 February to 29 March 2026**.

It is not essential to read this document before responding to the survey but it is important you read the main information document before responding. This, and the survey, can be found on the main consultation page here: haveyoursay.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/sand-dunes-consultation.

If you have any questions or need the survey in a different format, please email coastal@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

The deadline for responses is **23:59pm on 29 March 2026**.

2. Background

Sandbanks is host to a system of sand dunes in Poole, Dorset, which perform multiple functions including providing:

- a natural form of protection against coastal erosion;
- habitats for rare and protected species such as Sand Lizards; and
- an important role in increasing amenity value.

The sand dunes were created as part of the Sandbanks Coast Protection Scheme to protect the coastline from erosion, which included sand dune regeneration in 1996 (Phase I) and 2001 (Phase II). Following the scheme, the sand dunes have become well established and have spread along the coastline (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Sand dune growth since the Sandbanks Coast Protection Scheme.

However, there are several challenges involved with dune development at Sandbanks which require consideration, including:

- **Sand Lizards / Protected Species** – The presence of these limits what, when, where and how any development works can occur.
- **Storms** – Periodically cause dune face erosion/cliffing, reducing the coast protection and habitat functions of the dunes.
- **Visitor Trampling** – Excessive/repetitive trampling of sand dune habitat can reduce/destroy vegetation height and cover.
- **Beach Accessibility** – Some access paths have become buried by sand, preventing easy access for all users.
- **Sand Encroachment** – Stormy winters can cause an accumulation of wind-blown sand on the promenade, beach huts, buildings and property walls which are not designed to take the weight of sand loading.
- **Reduction of Sea Views and Privacy** – The height and spread of dunes may block views and / or reduce privacy from land and properties behind the dunes.

Additional information on project background and the challenges faced in this area can be found online at: [Sandbanks Dune Management Study 2024-2026 - South West Flood and Coastal](#).

The aim of this study is to develop an improved approach to managing the sand dunes to consider these impacts whilst ensuring they continue to provide coastal protection and habitat for protected species.

3. An engagement-led approach

We have taken an engagement-led approach to develop an improved strategy to managing the sand dunes, which involves four stages. Below is a summary of each stage and a brief description of the outcomes to date.

Stage 1 – Finding Out

- We engaged with a variety of stakeholders to understand what the key issues with managing sand dunes are from a variety of perspectives
- Between 2023 and 2024, we interviewed key stakeholders to understand the current situation of sand dune management and determine what improvements could be made. We gathered information and insights and drew on expert knowledge and experience. Interviewees included:
 - Internal BCP Services (Environment, Seafront Operations, Estates, Events, Sustainability, Seafront Development, Planning and FCERM Asset Management Teams)
 - BCP Portfolio Holder
 - BCP Ward Councillors

- Key Local Stakeholders (Sandbanks Community Group members, local residents, Bournemouth University, Dorset Council Archeologist)
- Statutory Consultees (Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust, Historic England)
- We then ran a public survey between August and September 2024, asking residents and businesses for their views on the management of the sand dunes at Sandbanks. The survey received 371 responses. Most respondents agreed with the statement, “*The sand dunes at Sandbanks provide important habitat for rare and protected species including sand lizards and native plants*”. They also said the most important measures for managing the sand dunes at Sandbanks in the future were to:
 - Protect the sand dunes to help prevent flooding and coastal erosion,
 - Protect the sand dunes for sand lizards and other protected species, and
 - Protect the sand dunes from visitors trampling on them.
- Full details of the results can be found in the final [Engagement Report](#).

Stage 2 – Identifying and Assessing Options

- We analysed all the feedback from the Stage 1 responses and identified four key themes that are important for future sand dune management:
 - **Theme 1** – Protect and improve the natural environment
 - **Theme 2** – Enhance coastal protection using sand dunes
 - **Theme 3** – Improving access
 - **Theme 4** – Minimising hinterland impact and improving security.
- We held a workshop on 25 April 2025 with a range of key stakeholders to investigate technical options for managing the dunes for each of the four key themes (see [Section 3.2.2](#)), while determining which of these were most desirable and feasible to deliver
- After analysing the feedback from the workshop, we developed draft sand dune management approach for consultation in Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Consultation

- This is where we are now - running a public consultation to gather a variety of views from key stakeholders on the draft management approach outlined in this document
- We have engaged with Internal BCP Services, BCP Portfolio Holders, BCP Ward Councillors and Natural England on the proposed management approach
- A residents briefing was also held on the 12th December 2025 with six attendees who have been involved in the option development process. Feedback received during this session was highly supportive of the proposed approach, with attendees acknowledging that it clearly reflected the issues raised during previous stages of engagement
- We are now asking the wider community for their views before any decisions are made

- Once the consultation is closed, we will analyse the data and carefully consider the responses before making a final decision on how to manage the sand dunes at Sandbanks.

Stage 4 – Implement and Monitor

- Once a decision has been made, we will implement the new approach to sand dune management and continue to monitor the sand dunes and protected species, and learn from this process.
- We will continue to communicate with the local community as we implement the agreed approach.

3.1. Stage 1 – Finding Out

During the first stage of the study, we aimed to understand the different viewpoints about the sand dunes at Sandbanks by undertaking stakeholder interviews and a public survey. The information and insight gained would then be used to help us develop some possible options for how the sand dunes may be managed in the future.

3.1.1. Initial Stakeholder Engagement

Initial stakeholder engagement was carried out between September 2023 and February 2024 with key stakeholders using interviews with the following groups:

- Internal BCP Services (Environment, Seafront Operations, Estates, Events, Sustainability, Seafront Development, Planning and FCERM Asset Management Teams)
- BCP Portfolio Holder
- BCP Ward Councillors
- Key Local Stakeholders (Sandbanks Community Group members, local residents, Bournemouth University, Dorset Council Archeologist)
- Statutory Consultees (Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust, Historic England)

These interviews sought to understand the current situation of sand dune management and determine what improvements could be made, gathering information and insights and drawing on expert knowledge and experience.

3.1.2. Public Survey

A survey was then run between August and September 2024, asking residents and businesses for their views on the management of the sand dunes at Sandbanks. Respondents were asked to read the briefing document and complete the survey. They could also drop pins and comment on specific areas of interest on an interactive map.

The survey received 371 responses with respondents agreeing most with the statement, “*The sand dunes at Sandbanks provide important habitat for rare and protected species including sand lizards and native plants*”. They also said the most important measures for managing the sand dunes at Sandbanks in the future were to:

- Protect the sand dunes to help prevent flooding and coastal erosion,
- Protect the sand dunes for sand lizards and other protected species, and
- Protect the sand dunes from visitors trampling on them.

A more detailed breakdown of the responses to the survey is provided in the final [Engagement Report](#).

3.2. Stage 2 – Identifying and Assessing Options

3.2.1. Analysing feedback

The second phase of the project began with analysing all the feedback gathered during engagement with stakeholders in Stage 1. We identified four key themes from the different views expressed about how the sand dunes are managed. These themes are:

- **Theme 1** – Protect and improve the natural environment
- **Theme 2** – Enhance coastal protection using sand dunes
- **Theme 3** – Improving access
- **Theme 4** – Minimising hinterland impact and improving security.

From these key themes, we developed potential sand dune management approaches that addressed each of these viewpoints, based on pre-existing guidance. The management activities developed for each theme are presented on the maps in Figures Figure 2 to Figure 5 below. These activities are also set out in the tables in [Section 3.2.2](#).

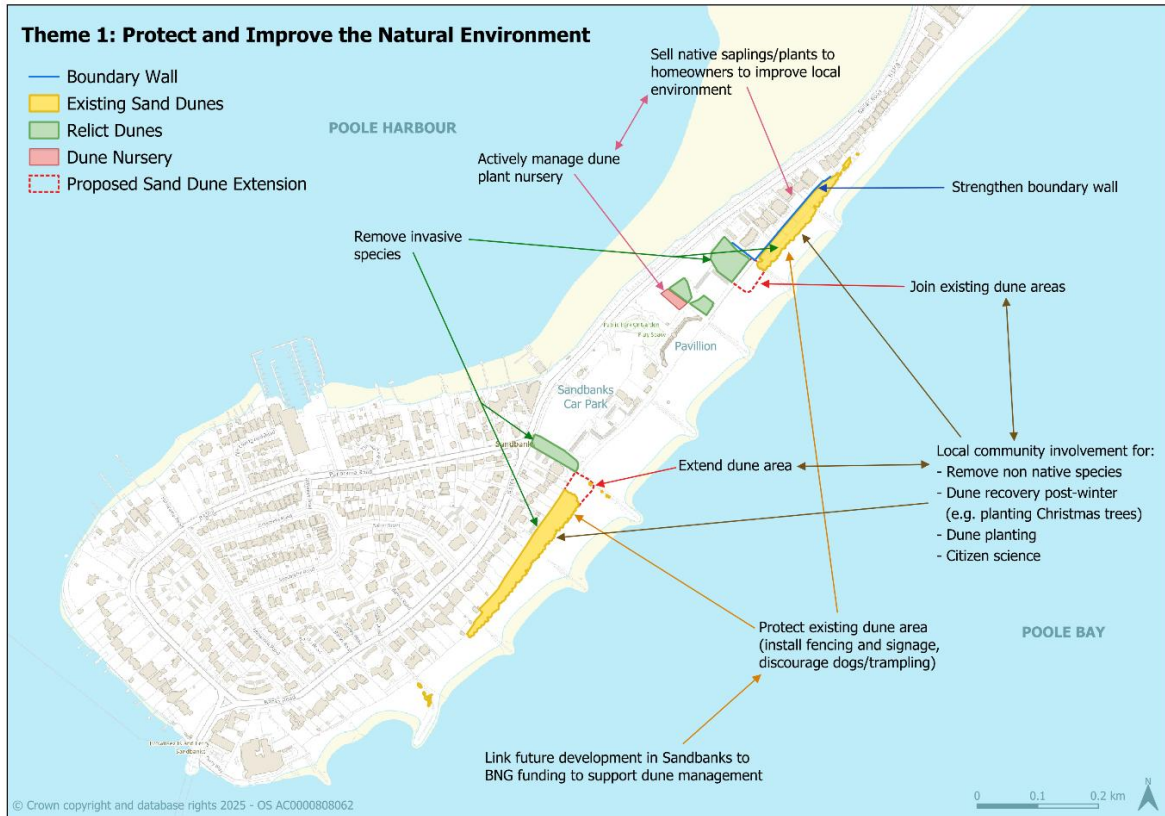


Figure 2 Management activities to address Theme 1, identified through analysis of stakeholder feedback.

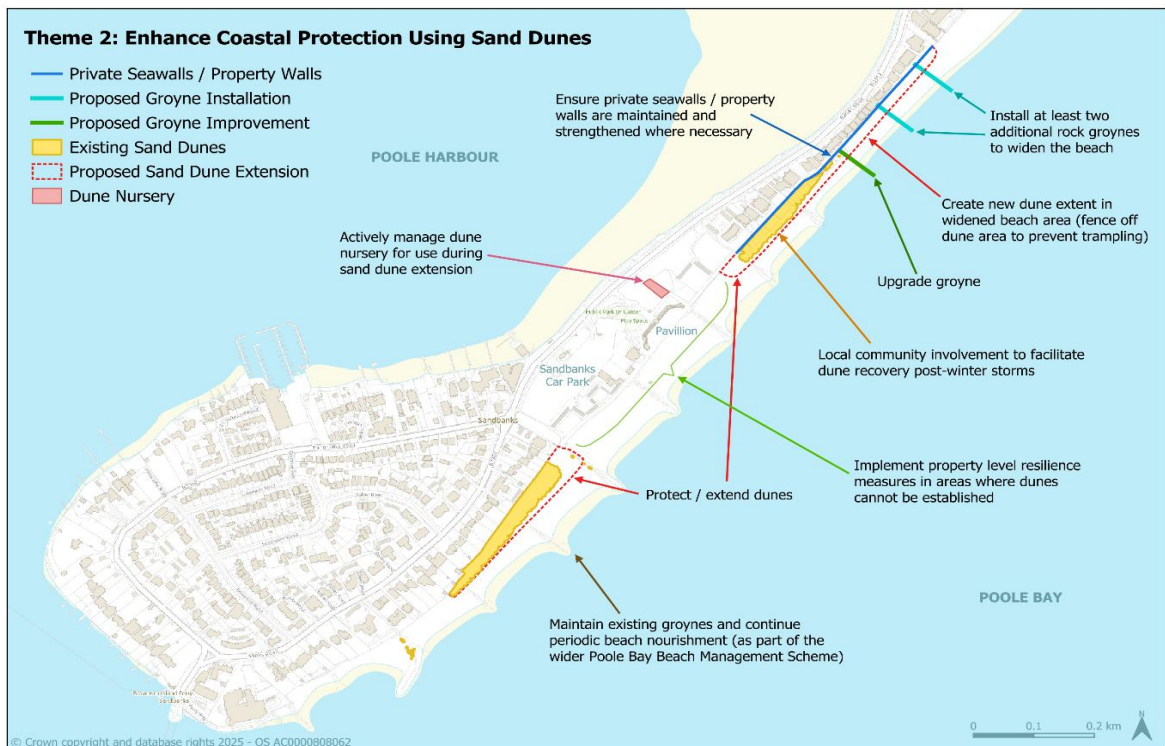


Figure 3 Management activities to address Theme 2, identified through analysis of stakeholder feedback.

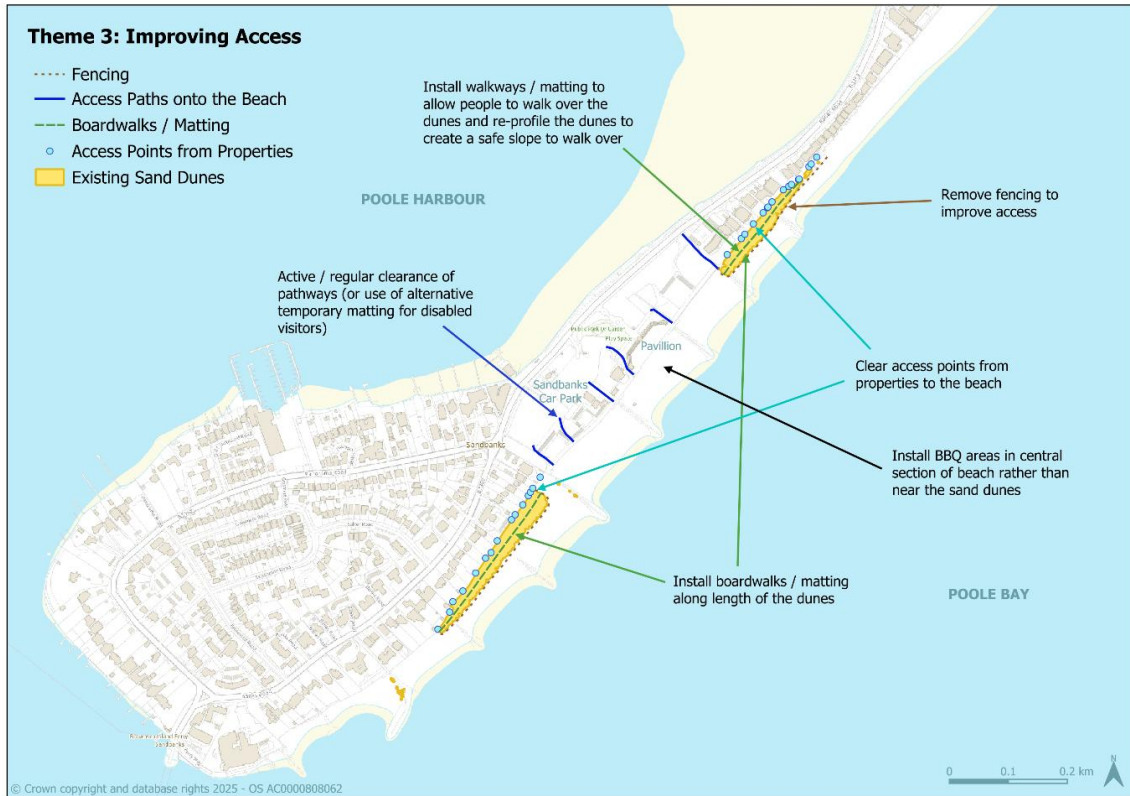


Figure 4 Management activities to address Theme 1, identified through analysis of stakeholder feedback.



Figure 5 Management activities to address Theme 1, identified through analysis of stakeholder feedback.

3.2.2. Stakeholder Workshop

The potential sand dune management approaches developed to address each of the themes were then used as the basis for discussion during a workshop with key stakeholders. The workshop took place on 25 April 2025. It brought together a wide range of stakeholders, reflecting all the different views gathered earlier in the project. This ensured that every viewpoint continued to shape the development of the improved management approach

18 stakeholders attended including statutory bodies, residents and members of the Sandbanks Community Group.

Stakeholders were divided into four groups, with each group rotating between tables to discuss the management options linked to the four themes. Their feedback helped assess which activities were both desirable and feasible.

Table 1 to Table 4 below summarise the responses received for each management activity which were used to decide whether these activities were desirable and feasible to deliver. Activities that stakeholders did not support have been greyed out and were not carried forward into the combined proposed management approach.

Table 1 – Stakeholder responses to sand dune management activities for ‘Theme 1: Protect and Improve the Natural Environment’. Activities highlighted in **RED** represent those that were not taken forward in the final approach.

Sand Dune Management Activity	Are you supportive of this management activity as part of a final new management approach?			Is this a desirable activity?
	Yes	Neutral	No	
Join existing dune areas to promote connection	8	2	7	No – not at this time due to access issues, but may be considered in future if efforts to manage dunes in a different way are unsuccessful
Extend dune area to reinstate area once vegetated	15	3	0	Yes
Link future development in Sandbanks to BNG funding	18	0	0	Yes
Strengthen boundary walls (inc. property owners’ balustrades on sea wall) to ensure dune growth does not cause damage	3	3	12	No – not at this time but may be considered in future if efforts to manage dunes in a different way are unsuccessful. Sand to be cleared away from walls to reduce loading instead.
Local community involvement (potentially set up a community sand dune management group)	18	0	0	Yes
Actively manage dune plant nursery to provide store of vegetation	18	0	0	Yes

Sand Dune Management Activity	Are you supportive of this management activity as part of a final new management approach?			Is this a desirable activity?
	Yes	Neutral	No	
Sell native plants grown in the dune nursery to local homeowners	15	1	1	Yes
Removal of non-native invasive species within the dune vegetation	18	0	0	Yes
Install signs and display boards to raise awareness and discourage trampling	16	1	1	Yes
Install control fencing in conjunction with signage to control visitor access	12	5	1	Yes

Table 2 – Stakeholder responses to sand dune management activities for 'Theme 2: Enhance Coastal Protection using Sand Dunes'. Activities highlighted in **RED** represent those that were not taken forward in the final approach.

Sand Dune Management Activity	Are you supportive of this management activity as part of a final new management approach?			Is this a desirable activity?
	Yes	Neutral	No	
Protect / extend sand dunes to provide additional coastal protection	14	0	4 (for south of Phase II)	Yes
Maintain existing groynes and continue periodic beach nourishment to retain beach width, enabling dune establishment	17	1	0	Yes
Upgrade / install additional rock groynes to widen narrow section of beach, enabling sand dune establishment	18	0	0	Yes
Create new dune extent in widened beach area and fence off to prevent trampling	12	0	4 (for south of Phase II)	Yes
Local community involvement (potentially set up a community sand dune management group)	18	0	0	Yes
Actively manage dune plant nursery to provide store of vegetation	18	0	0	Yes
Strengthen boundary walls to ensure dune growth does not cause damage	4	2	12	No – not at this time but may be considered in future if efforts to manage dunes in a

Sand Dune Management Activity	Are you supportive of this management activity as part of a final new management approach?			Is this a desirable activity?
	Yes	Neutral	No	
				different way are unsuccessful
Implement property level resilience measures in areas where dunes cannot be established	11	7	0	Yes

Table 3 – Stakeholder responses to sand dune management activities for ‘Theme 3: Improving Access’. Activities highlighted in RED represent those that were not taken forward in the final approach.

#	Are you supportive of this management activity as part of a final new management approach?			Is this a desirable activity?
	Yes	Neutral	No	
Install boardwalks / matting along the length of the dunes to enable easy access for visitors to walk through the dunes	3	1	14	No
Clear access points from properties to the beach to enable easy access to the beach	4	10	4	Yes – when combined with activity to clear sand against boundary walls at Phase II site (allowing access behind the dunes to the beach rather than up and over the dunes)
Regular clearance of public pathways to the beach to maintain access (or use temporary matting for disabled visitors)	15	3	0	Yes
Re-profile the dunes and install walkways / matting to create a safe slope for the public to walk over the dunes	4	0	13	No
Remove fencing surrounding the dunes to improve access through their entire extent	0	0	18	No
Install BBQ areas in central section of beach where no sand dunes are present, ensuring access to BBQ areas is never restricted	5	4	9	No – pick up messaging around use of BBQs in relation to sand dune signage to deter use near dunes (BCP Seafront to determine future use of BBQs at Sandbanks)

Table 4 – Stakeholder responses to sand dune management activities for 'Theme 4: Minimising Hinterland Impact and Improving Security'.

Sand Dune Management Activity	Are you supportive of this management activity as part of a final new management approach?			Is this a desirable activity?
	Yes	Neutral	No	
Regularly remove sand which builds up against boundary walls to reduce loading to these structures	15	2	0	Yes
Periodic clearance of accumulated wind-blown sand from private properties (inside property boundaries) behind the dunes, to be undertaken by property owners.	15	0	1	Yes
Define a maximum height / profile for the sand dunes and agree a process for recycling sand (i.e. topping the sand dunes and placing material at the toe or other defined areas) when this height is exceeded.	14	1	1	Yes
Maintain / improve fencing and signage surrounding the dunes to deter access and taking account of security of properties behind. Potentially include the risk of a fine and implement beach ranger patrols to deter antisocial behaviour.	16	0	1	Yes

Reflecting on the workshop feedback, we identified that there was significant support of the majority of the activities proposed across the themes, as well as strong agreement not to undertake some activities. There were only a small number of areas with mixed views where further consideration of a modified or compromised approach would be required.

3.2.3. Developing a consolidated option

Due to the high level of agreement at the stakeholder workshop, we were able to develop a clear proposal for managing the sand dunes in the future. The proposals take into consideration each of the differing viewpoints and the extent to which they were considered desirable and feasible.

4. The Proposed Sand Dune Management Approach

Details of the proposals can be found in the Information Document on the main consultation page here: haveyoursay.bccouncil.gov.uk/sand-dunes-consultation. Please read each proposal carefully before responding to the survey.