



# **Sandbanks Sand Dunes Consultation**

**16 February to 29 March 2026**

**Final decisions on proposals following  
feedback**



# Contents

1.	Introduction .....	3
2.	Final decisions on proposals following feedback.....	3
2.1.	Proposal 1 – Regularly clearing public pathways to the beach to maintain access.....	3
2.2.	Proposal 2 – Develop a process for removing non-native invasive species within the dune vegetation .....	3
2.3.	Proposal 3 – Establish a new community Sand Dune Management Group .	4
2.4.	Proposal 4 – Actively manage the dune plant nursery.....	4
2.5.	Proposal 5 – Regularly removing sand which builds up against boundary walls.....	5
2.6.	Proposal 6 – Make native plants grown in the dune nursery available to local homeowners to improve the local environment .....	5
2.7.	Proposal 7 – Upgrade / install additional rock groynes along the Sandbanks frontage .....	6
2.8.	Proposal 8 – Extend the dunes along the coastline in the widened beach areas .....	6
2.9.	Proposal 9 – Periodically remove wind blown sand that has built up on private properties .....	6
2.10.	Proposal 10 – Define a maximum height / profile for the sand dunes and agree a process for recycling sand .....	7
2.11.	Proposal 11 – Maintain and improve signage and rope and post fencing around the dunes to raise awareness and discourage trampling.....	7
2.12.	Proposal 12 – Reinstate once vegetated dune area north of existing Phase I dunes .....	8
2.13.	Proposal 13 – Maintaining existing groynes and continue periodic beach nourishment.....	8
3.	Further Information .....	9

## 1. Introduction

The [Sandbanks Sand Dunes Consultation](#) ran from 16<sup>th</sup> February to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026 to capture public views on proposals for the future management of the sand dunes at Sandbanks, aiming to balance environmental protection, climate resilience, accessibility, and the needs of residents and visitors. This consultation followed two previous public engagement phases with key stakeholders including residents in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) between 2023 and 2025.

All responses to the proposals have been carefully reviewed and considered, with feedback playing an important role in shaping our approach to management.

This document sets out BCP Council's final decisions on the proposals, along with details of how the consultation responses have influenced the outcome.

## 2. Final decisions on proposals following feedback

### 2.1. Proposal 1 – Regularly clearing public pathways to the beach to maintain access

With 96% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of regularly clearing public pathways onto the beach to maintain access.

If clearing is not possible, we plan to explore options around the use of temporary matting to support access for disabled visitors.

Regarding concerns over temporary matting degrading and entering the sea water, this matting would only be placed in the upper part of the beach area and largely away from where waves will reach it in order to minimise risk of it being damaged and degraded.

### 2.2. Proposal 2 – Develop a process for removing non-native invasive species within the dune vegetation

With 89.2% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity to develop a process for removing non-native invasive species within the dune vegetation.

As part of defining the exact approach to implementing this proposal, we will take on board all comments from the consultation and will develop a clear and safe methodology to removing invasive species. This will include working with BCP Council's ecologists in order to avoid adverse impacts on the environment.

We will also provide advice for homeowners on types of native vegetation that would be suitable to plant should they wish to within a 'householder guide' to raise awareness and prevent spread of non-native invasive species.

Regarding concerns over the costs of ongoing non-native invasive species removal, we anticipate being able to bid for external funding to assist with this now that we are able to define

a clear plan for future sand dune management at Sandbanks. This is also an activity where community volunteer support could be sought which would assist with keeping costs low, as occurs in other places already (e.g. [Cornwall](#)).

### **2.3. Proposal 3 – Establish a new community Sand Dune Management Group**

With 85.9% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of establishing a new community Sand Dune Management Group.

Whilst there is overall support for involving the local community, there are concerns regarding the uncertainty of securing volunteers, their responsibility, and representation within the group. Reflecting on the comments received, we will consider making this group slightly more informal with overarching responsibility for dune management sitting with BCP Council. In taking this action forwards, we will engage further with local community group representatives to confirm an appropriate level of involvement to determine exactly how this will be implemented.

Regarding concerns over the costs of ongoing management of community involvement, we will explore options for external funding to assist with this now that we are able to define a clear plan for future sand dune management at Sandbanks. If external funding is not secured, the scale of the community involvement may be reduced to align to budgets available within BCP Council to support sand dune management work.

### **2.4. Proposal 4 – Actively manage the dune plant nursery**

With 87.9% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of actively managing the dune plant nursery to support dune recovery and management. In doing so, we will seek advice from BCP Council's ecologists to develop a process which avoids risks to the local environment.

Where there are concerns around using this nursery to support the growth of the dunes, please refer to our Proposal 8 response which highlights that we will ensure their growth is managed in a controlled way to ensure safety concerns do not become an issue.

Where there are concerns around the feasibility and sustainability of volunteer-led nursery management, please refer to our Proposal 3 response where we suggest dune management will be under BCP Council direction with support from volunteers where appropriate.

Regarding concerns over the costs of ongoing management of the dune plant nursery, we will explore options for external funding to assist with this now that we are able to define a clear plan for future sand dune management at Sandbanks. If funding is not secured and/or volunteer support is not forthcoming, we will continue with the level of dune nursery management that has been in place in recent years.

## **2.5. Proposal 5 – Regularly removing sand which builds up against boundary walls**

With 81.2% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of regularly (annually, if feasible) removing sand which builds up against boundary walls where this poses risks to safety and structural integrity. The process for doing so will be agreed with BCP Council's ecologists to ensure this is done in an environmentally sensitive way and always under their supervision. Methods for removal and subsequent placement of material will be clearly defined and communicated.

Regarding comments around the sustainability of this approach and suggestions to strengthen boundary walls instead of clearing sand, we explored this with key stakeholders when developing the approaches which have been consulted on and this was considered to be the most appropriate approach to address the issue at this time. However, the requirement to strengthen boundary walls in the future may be re-evaluated if circumstances change.

Historically, funding for such sand clearance against walls has been mixed, with some works funded by BCP Council (when there is a risk to safety / structural integrity) and some by private properties (typically for access reasons). This mixed approach is to continue going forwards, but we will set out clear guidelines on how this is managed and what the requirements are for how works are approved and supervised.

We anticipate being able to bid for external funding (e.g. Environment Agency funding for Natural Flood Management which includes for sand dune management) to assist with works undertaken by BCP Council for safety / structural integrity reasons as part of wider dune management (e.g. Proposal 10) now that we are able to define a clear plan for future sand dune management.

## **2.6. Proposal 6 – Make native plants grown in the dune nursery available to local homeowners to improve the local environment**

With 81.2% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of making native plants grown in the dune nursery available to local homeowners to improve the local environment as and when there is a surplus not needed to support planting of the dune areas. BCP Council would retain responsibility for the dune nursery as per Proposal 4. The approach would make native plants more readily accessible and would be supported by provision of clear advice on planting of native species (either from the nursery or other sources) to minimise risk to the native dune vegetation (see also Proposal 2). To implement this proposal, we will undertake further engagement with local community group representatives and other interested parties to develop the detail of how this will most effectively operate.

Regarding concerns over the costs of producing guidance and ongoing dune nursery management, we will explore options for external funding and/or possibly charging to purchase plants from the nursery to assist with this.

## **2.7. Proposal 7 – Upgrade / install additional rock groynes along the Sandbanks frontage**

With 79.1% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to take this proposal forwards for more technical, economic and environmental appraisal as well as engagement with the community, as part of the Poole Bay, Poole Harbour & Wareham Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy review that is just getting underway which will consider this in the context of the wider management of the Poole Bay coastline. Should, following public consultation, the Strategy review identify the upgrading and installing additional rock groynes along the Sandbanks frontage as the leading option eligible for central government funding for coastal risk management, then it will still require further work to develop a detailed business case to actually secure central government funding to enable it to be constructed. This process will take a number of years and it is not guaranteed that this proposal will be implemented in part or in full, but does warrant further assessment at this time.

## **2.8. Proposal 8 – Extend the dunes along the coastline in the widened beach areas**

75.8% of respondents support this proposal to extend the dunes along the coastline. Much of the support for this proposal is conditional, subject to proper management and control of dune growth. We plan to implement this activity on the basis that the concerns raised will be addressed through our other sand dune management proposals. This includes ensuring fencing and signage is improved to allow vegetation to establish successfully (Proposal 11), clearing sand from pathways and against boundary walls to maintain access onto the beach and prevent damage to structures (Proposals 1 and 5), and defining a maximum dune height to minimise security issues of properties behind (Proposal 10). This extent of dune growth achieved by this activity will be dependent on Proposal 7 to install additional groynes along the frontage and retain a wide enough beach to support dune growth, and concerns for extending the dunes will be taken into consideration when further investigating Proposal 7.

Regarding concerns over the costs of extending the dunes, we anticipate being able to bid for external funding to assist with this now that we are able to define a clear plan for future sand dune management at Sandbanks. If funding bids are not successful, then the scale and rate of actively extending dune growth to support greater resilience against coastal flood risk and provide habitat will be reduced accordingly to align to available budgets within BCP Council.

## **2.9. Proposal 9 – Periodically remove wind blown sand that has built up on private properties**

69.8% of respondents support this proposal to periodically remove wind-blown sand that has built up on private properties, within property boundaries. This would be funded by the private property owners, who will have to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and consenting requirements. This will not be enforced by BCP Council. A clear definition of responsibilities for this activity will be set out. We will, however, provide advice on appropriate

methodologies (including ecological protection requirements) and where to place any removed sand.

We acknowledge that residents feel that the height of the dunes increases the amount of sand blowing into properties, making clearance difficult. We plan to address this to a certain extent under Proposal 10, where defining a maximum height of the dune will reduce this. However, we recognise that this will not completely stop wind blown sand so a degree of clearance by private property owners will still be required.

## **2.10. Proposal 10 – Define a maximum height / profile for the sand dunes and agree a process for recycling sand**

70.5% of respondents support this proposal to define a maximum height/profile of the sand dunes. Much of the support for this proposal is conditional, subject to setting out clear parameters and protecting the environment.

We plan to implement this activity on the basis that the process for managing dune height will be clearly defined with procedures, rules and regulations in place. This process will begin with assessing the requirement for lowering annually, undertaking an ecological assessment to determine whether it is safe to carry out lowering, ensuring that suitable supervision is in place during the works to minimise disturbance to protected species and ensure lowering is only undertaken to the agreed and defined level.

We are in agreement with those that support natural dune management, however we are constrained by the unique position of the dunes within an urban environment and the location of properties directly behind. It is therefore not feasible to allow the dunes to self-regulate as the dunes will not be able to reach a natural equilibrium without being able to roll back onto the properties behind. Managing dune height will also aid recovery of the dunes following winter storms by placing topped material at the eroded toe. The aim of this activity will therefore be to strike a balance between environmental protection, access and safety.

When planning dune height/profile management works, we will also engage with local stakeholders to explore the possibility of addressing concerns raised regarding ability to undertake maintenance to infrastructure buried beneath the dunes.

Regarding concerns over the costs of managing dune height, we anticipate being able to bid for external funding to assist with this now that we are able to define a clear plan for future sand dune management at Sandbanks which will enable works to occur more regularly than has occurred historically. If funding is not secured, then such works will occur less regularly as per recent past, and be subject to availability of funding in BCP Council budgets.

## **2.11. Proposal 11 – Maintain and improve signage and rope and post fencing around the dunes to raise awareness and discourage trampling**

With 85.9% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of maintaining and improving signage and rope-and-post fencing around the dunes. In doing so, we will incorporate suggestions from consultation responses to ensuring that signage is

informative and educative but not overly intrusive. We will also seek input from members of the Sandbanks Community Group when developing appropriate signage and fencing. Periodic beach ranger patrols will also be carried out to deter antisocial behaviour, as far as our current resources allow.

This proposal will maintain and improve signage and fencing where it already exists, and around any areas of dune which may grow/be planted in the future. We are not proposing to fence off any other areas of the beach.

Regarding concerns about rope-and-post fencing inhibiting existing access to the beach, we will engage with local residents to understand where any such concerns arise and seek to find a suitable balance between environmental protection and access.

## **2.12. Proposal 12 – Reinstate once vegetated dune area north of existing Phase I dunes**

With 81.9% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of reinstating the once vegetated dune area north of the existing Phase I dunes.

Concerns regarding this activity will be addressed by our other sand dune management proposals. For example, we plan to control access onto this newly created dune using rope-and-post fencing and signage (Proposal 11). We will also ensure access routes around the back of this dune area are maintained from the car park onto the beach.

Some respondents suggested linking this proposed dune area to the existing dune. This has been considered during previous rounds of engagement with key stakeholders and deemed infeasible due to the requirement for beach cleansing machinery to access the beach via this route.

Regarding concerns over the costs of reinstating this dune area, we anticipate being able to bid for external funding to assist with this now that we are able to define a clear plan for future sand dune management at Sandbanks to support proactive dune restoration in this area. If funding is not secured, we will keep this area fenced off and allow natural processes to hopefully re-establish the dunes but at a likely slower pace with less certainty of success.

## **2.13. Proposal 13 – Maintaining existing groynes and continue periodic beach nourishment**

With 91.9% of respondents supporting this proposal, we plan to implement this activity of maintaining existing groynes and continuing periodic beach nourishment.

The rock groynes along the Sandbanks frontage were originally constructed in the 19th Century due to ongoing erosion issues and depletion of sand dunes. These groynes accreted (i.e. trapped and build up) sand and created a stable frontage on which much of the development we see today was built. If the groynes were not maintained it is likely that rapid beach erosion would occur and the frontage would be at risk of breaching.

Beach renourishment was originally identified as a preferred option in the existing Poole Bay, Poole Harbour & Wareham Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy in 2014. To

deliver this, the Poole Bay Beach Management Scheme has secured central government funding to renourish beaches across the frontage between 2015 and 2032.

In the coming years we will be reviewing the Strategy which will further assess the viability of continuing this activity (alongside possible additional groynes as per Proposal 10). Should the Strategy review confirm the viability for continuing beach nourishment works, these would then be delivered in line with future phases of the Poole Bay Beach Management Scheme, which incorporates ecological considerations to ensure impact on the marine and coastal environment is minimised.

### **3. Further Information**

For further information about the consultation, or to get in touch, please visit:

<https://haveyoursay.bpcouncil.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/sand-dunes-consultation>.