

**13 MARCH 2025**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PLACE AND SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 13 March 2025

\* Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)  
Cllr Alvin Reid (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

\* Peter Armstrong  
\* Allan Glass  
\* Matthew Hartmann

**Councillors:**

\* Stephanie Osborne  
\* Adam Parker  
Michael Thierry

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Substitutes:**

Steve Clarke (Substitute for Alvin Reid)

**Councillors:**

Geoffrey Blunden  
Derek Tipp

**Councillors:**

Christine Ward

**Officers Attending:**

James Carpenter, Ros Carvell, Steve Cook, Tim Guymer, Andrew Herring, Roxanne King, Nathaniel Lucas, Saqib Yasin, Chris Noble and Andy Rogers

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Alvin Reid, and Cllr Steve Clarke attended as his substitute.

**28 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

**29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**31 CALL - IN OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION - HURST SPIT**

The Panel reviewed and the Portfolio Holder Decision regarding Maintenance and Management of Hurst Spit, following call-in from Cllr Jack Davies.

A presentation in support of the report was given by Steve Cook, the service manager for Coastal, which are appended to these minutes as **Appendix 1**.

The Panel noted that the portfolio holder decision had not represented a change of policy, but was a statement of actual practice over recent years. In essence, it confirmed that NFDC was not a landowner of Hurst Spit, had no statutory duties over it, but instead it worked in partnership with the Environment Agency, and landowners and undertook works, subject to external funding being made available and the required authorities being in place. The portfolio holder had also written to the Government expressing concerns about the absence of funding to undertake repair works for this purpose.

Cllr J Davies had called in the decision on the basis that the decision 'needed greater scrutiny'. In his absence from the meeting, Cllr M Wade read out a statement from Cllr Davies, which expanded on his reasons. Councillor Davies referred to the works in Autumn of 2022 costing £58,000 and the concerns of local residents living near the coastline between Milford and Lymington. He suggested that CIL funding could be made available for this purpose.

Officers advised that the costs of repairing the damaged section of Hurst Spit would be significantly higher than the £58,000 cost of the last repairs, due to the current difficulties with access and the extensive work needed to get vehicles and plant on the scene.

Members were of the view that the portfolio holder decision had been a good way of sending a message to the interested parties and had made the Council's position clear. Members emphasised the need for the Council to continue both to proactively engage with its partners and involve local people in meetings to keep them abreast of developments.

The Portfolio holder gave assurances that this engagement was taking place, and that the Council would undertake the maintenance if the necessary funding was available.

**RESOLVED:**

That, having heard the officers' advice and noting the general context, the Panel supports the Portfolio holder's decision as the correct action regarding this matter.

**32 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

The Panel considered a report and supporting presentation on climate adaptation in the District.

It was explained that actions flowing from this report would be considered by the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Task and Finish Group, which would be commencing its work shortly.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Panel acknowledges the anticipated climate change impacts for New Forest District and the effects these may have on the environment, residents, and Council services, based on the data and projections outlined in this report;
- (ii) That the dissemination of this report to members of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Task and Finish Group, to inform discussion on the future actions and priorities of climate adaptation in New Forest District, be endorsed;
- (iii) That the Panel supports the ongoing adaptation of council assets and services through delivery of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Action Plan (linked to organisational transformation, policy development, risk assessment and business continuity processes) to improve efficiency and resilience of council operations;
- (iv) That the Panel supports the communication of climate change adaptation messages and measures to council stakeholders via the summary and action guides, the NFDC website, and other communication channels

### 33 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND FOR 2025/26

The Panel considered a report setting out projects proposed to be funded from the UK shared prosperity fund in the financial year 2025/26.

Whilst Panel members were generally supportive of the list of projects to be progressed, two members strongly supported the Hythe Pier Pontoon project for inclusion, primarily for its immediate benefits in helping to reinstate the Hythe Ferry service, but also for tourism and the economic benefits, and alleviating local road congestion. At present the project had not been prioritised. The members also emphasised the importance of the project in the context of Local Government Reorganisation and contributing to demonstrating this Council's continued commitment to the prosperity of the Waterside.

Officers emphasised the difficult decisions needing to be made with limited funds available, the projects that scored more highly, and the unsuitability of the project using CIL monies, which were intended for creating additional capacity and improvements for residents to mitigate the impacts of development. If Hythe Pier company or Red Funnel were forthcoming with a suitable scheme, this could potentially be considered under CIL where additionality could be demonstrated.

Overall, members did not feel that Hythe Pier Pontoon could be progressed at this time, given the current uncertainties around the project, including the multiplicity of ownerships involved, lack of clarity on costs and business case, and the need for match funding from other neighbouring councils and ferry companies, which was not yet forthcoming.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Panel recommend to Cabinet the following:

- (i) That the continued purpose of the UK SPF be noted;
- (ii) That the Panel support the allocation of 25/26 UKSPF funding towards specific projects as set out in this report;

- (iii) That once approved in principle by Cabinet, delegated authority will be sought to assign future decision making associated with the finalisation of the project programme for 25/26 UKSPF spend to the Strategic Director for Place Operations and Sustainability, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy.

### **34 UPDATE ON LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES - PRESENTATION**

The Panel received a presentation giving an update on local nature recovery strategies. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation slides was available with the agenda pack.

A Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was a new system of plans for nature recovery covering the whole of England and was a key mechanism for planning and delivering the national nature recovery network.

The presentation covered the LNRS process, partners and key stakeholders, engagement, details of the public survey and its results, issues for the New Forest and Hampshire, potential measures, priority species and the timeline for 2025.

A member stressed the need to ensure that the Council engaged with Bird Aware. Officers responded that this organisation would have been invited to participate in the related workshops.

In answer to a question, officers explained that the District Council had a duty to have regard to the LNRS when producing the Local Plan.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

### **35 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS**

The Panel received the corporate plan key performance data for quarter three for 2024/25.

In response to a query, officers explained that the KPI regarding business newsletters had been withdrawn when the corporate plan was refreshed, as it was not thought that the newsletter itself had a direct measurable impact. Officers undertook to make enquiries regarding efforts underway to engage with businesses.

It was queried whether annual targets were the best a method of driving up improvements, and whether more regular reports would be more effective. A member also sought clarification on the actual improvements identified to date as a result of the KPIs.

It was explained that some KPIs gave indications of a journey of improvement as a collective of measures. The nature of some of the measures depended on availability of data and collation of statistical data returns, sometimes through national bodies. A more cohesive summary would be provided to Cabinet at the end of the year, post April, and that would give a summary of all the commitments set out in the corporate plan, how they had progressed, and the work undertaken by the services to promote this.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**36 PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S UPDATE**

Members received updates from the 2 Portfolio holders for this Panel.

**Cllr G Blunden, Environment and Sustainability**

The Council had just taken possession of Hardley Depot, which from 24 March would be the operational base for waste, street cleaning, grounds and vehicle maintenance, tree inspections and pest control.

The roll out of the Waste Strategy roll out has continued, with the campaign launching on 23 January including a postcode checker tool for residents.

Phase 1 of the roll out was about to begin for the Lymington, New Milton and Brockenhurst areas from 1 April onwards with 31,000 information leaflets being sent. Waste advisors were in post and already helping residents. Waste service member briefings were planned for 8 and 9 April.

On Coastal, following detailed inspections, a decision had regrettably been taken to issue beach hut licence terminations for 46 Hordle beach huts as a result of damage from winter storms, given the risks they now posed. The decision had not been taken lightly and the Council was attempting to contact owners directly by telephone to explain the matter.

Recent litter picking along the A326 had accumulated over 250 bags of litter from the waterside area along a 6 mile stretch of that road. The portfolio holder would ensure this was publicised. A337 litter picking from New Milton to Lymington had just commenced.

In response to a question on litter picking on Main Road, Marchwood, the portfolio holder believed this was on the list and undertook to it confirm this.

The Portfolio holder confirmed that the Crabby Campaign would continue, and similar campaigns for roads would continue and would consider use of mechanisms where the public could report people seen littering.

**Cllr Derek Tipp, Portfolio holder for Planning and Economy**

Building Control team had just completed a successful audit.

Street naming and numbering had achieved increased income this year.

The Local Plan Issues and Scope consultation was currently underway and would finish on 4 April. Also a second call for sites under the local plan was underway. Other planning work included a sustainability appraisal, a habitat regulation assessment, and a green belt study costing £70,000, covered by a government grant. There was also a port and business needs study. Economic needs and housing needs reports were also being undertaken by consultants.

The NPA are also revising their local plan which was also out for consultation. NFDC would be making a response to this.

Finally, the Portfolio Holder welcomed two new members of staff; Nathaniel Lucas as an Economic Development Officer, and Jeannie Satchell, Economic Development Manager.

**37 WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Work Programme be approved.

CHAIRMAN

# Portfolio Holder Decision



A decision by Portfolio Holder - Environment & Sustainability has been published:  
Maintenance & Management of Hurst Spit

On 19 February 2025, Cllr Geoff Blunden, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability made the following decision:

1. That it be noted that:

- NFDC is not a landowner of Hurst Spit
- NFDC has no statutory duty to undertake FCERM

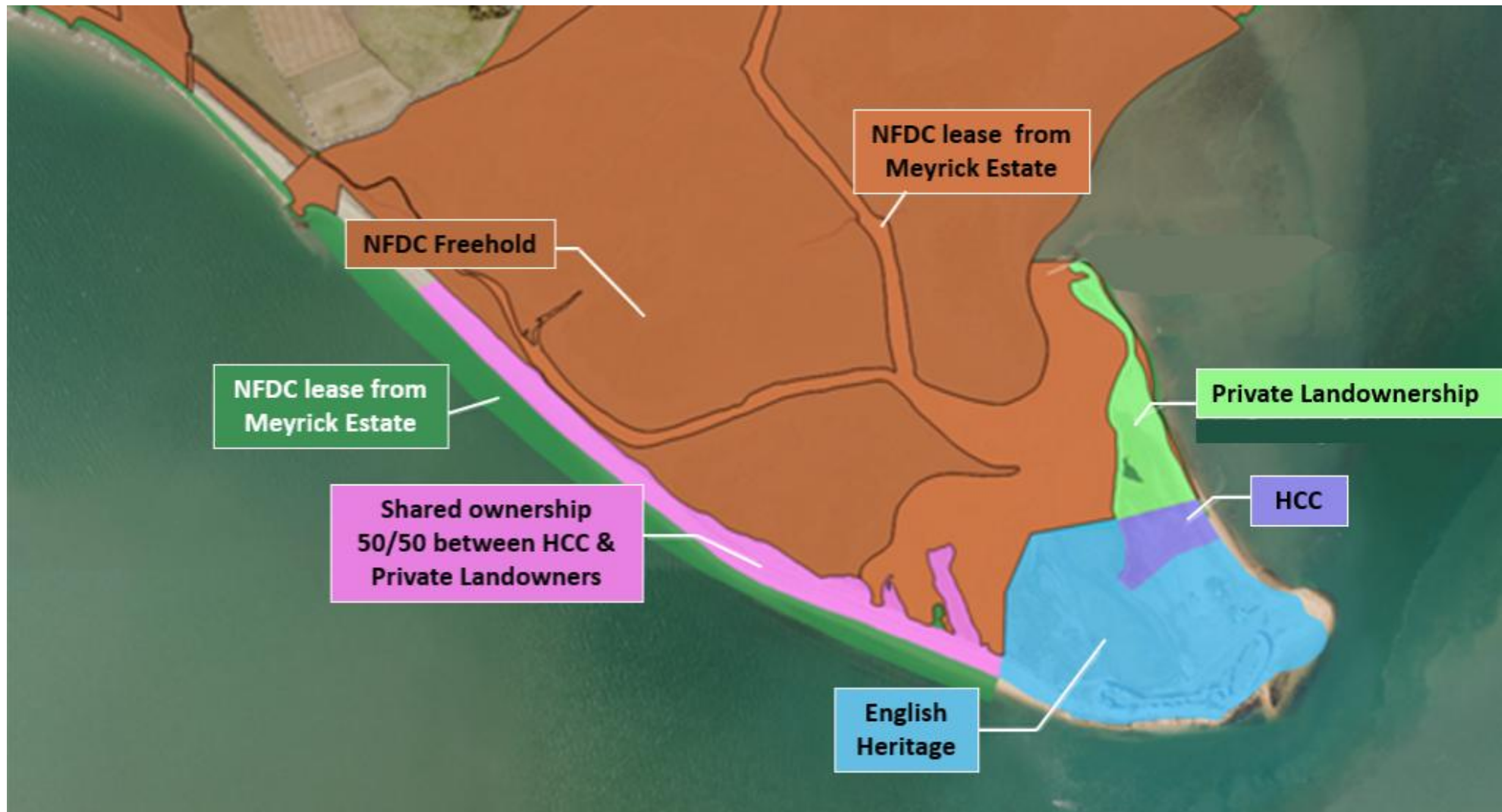
2. That when maintenance and repair work is required to Hurst Spit, NFDC approach those landowners and organisations that have an operational interest in Hurst Spit to gauge their interest and likely financial support to enable repair works to be undertaken.

3. That NFDC will consider undertaking maintenance and repair works to Hurst Spit if in receipt of external funding (Grant in aid or other) and if works are required to protect against flood and erosion risk and if the appropriate licences and permissions are in place.

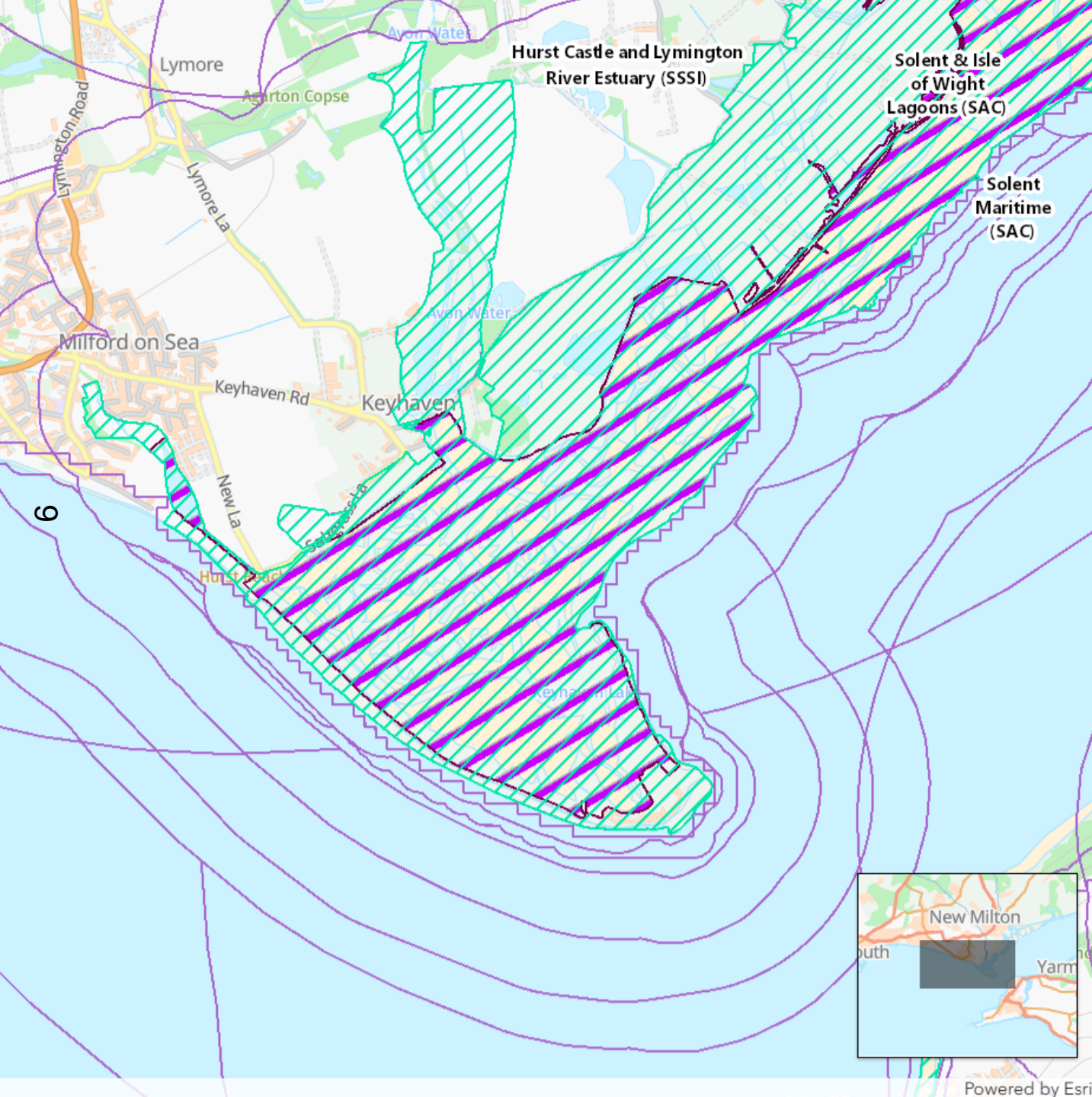
4. That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability write to the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs to express concerns over the potential impacts of damage to Hurst Spit and the lack of funding provision to undertake repair works.



# Land Ownership







- Highly designated area. Important features such as:
  - Vegetated Shingle
  - Overwintering birds
  - Ground nesting birds
  - Geological formation
  - Heritage/Historic features

# Designations



## Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM)

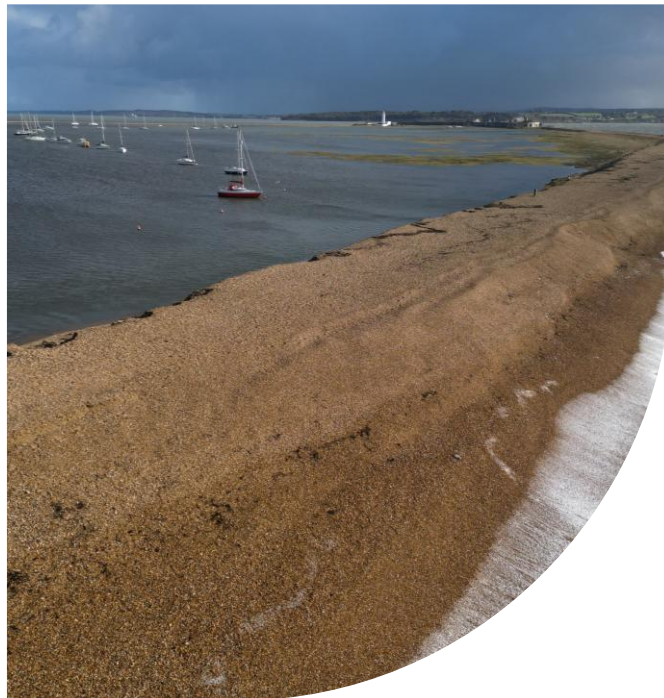
The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (**Defra**) has the overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England.

Under the Coast Protection Act 1949 and Land Drainage Act 1991 Local Authorities and the Environment Agency (EA) have permissive powers to carry out work to reduce the risk of erosion and flooding by the sea.

**There is no legal obligation for Local Authorities to carry out coastal protection work.**

The Local Authority delivers coastal protection projects using permissive powers where funding is available through EA grant aid and partnership funding. The proposed works must provide:

- A clear economic benefit.
- A practical engineering solution.
- A solution which meets Environmental legislation.





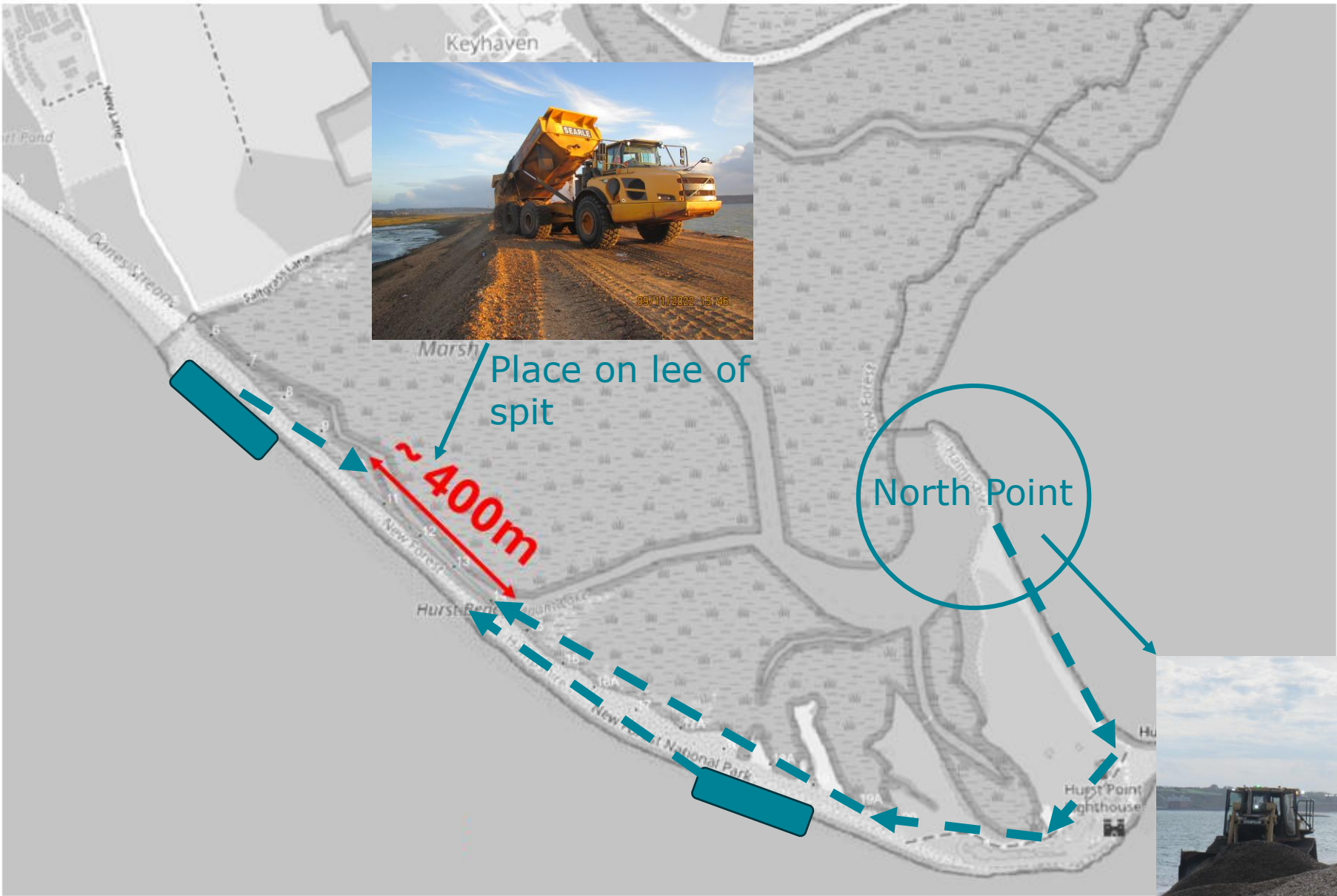
# Funding






- In the past funding for maintenance works (beach recycling/trimming) has been obtained from Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) administered by the Environment Agency.
- Contributions have previously been provided (2022) by landowners such as Hampshire County Council and English Heritage.

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-  Damaged Area
-  Typical areas of accretion for trimming
-  North Point used for recycling





# Storm Impacts



Crest width  
<1m  
Vehicle access  
along crest lost



# Questions?

