



Beach Management Strategy

For Cornwall Council Beaches

2011 – 2015

Transport, Waste and Environment

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Executive summary

Fact file:

- ***The Council owns all or part of or leases 40 beaches***
- ***The Council currently manages 86 beaches***
- ***There are over approximately 300 beaches in Cornwall***
- ***Beach management budget 2010/11: £287,000***

Council owned/leased beaches:

Beaches form an essential part of life in Cornwall, providing an important outlet for recreational use, supporting the local economy to the tune of £1.6 billion a year through tourism and supporting 20,000 jobs (South West Tourism 2007). Beaches help provide natural coastal protection, contribute significantly to the distinctive Cornish landscape and sustain varied wildlife. Beaches are a particularly significant part of Cornwall's natural infrastructure and one of the main reasons why people choose to come to Cornwall to live and visit all year round.

It is this contribution to Cornwall's prosperity (financial, cultural, social, and environmental) that highlights the importance of these natural assets and how they support Cornwall's competitive identity forming a significant aspect to Cornwall's character and the health and well being of its residents. This influence also brings into focus why beaches should be managed now and for the future. Poor management of these key assets may reflect badly on the Council, and indeed on the perception of Cornwall as a whole as a place to live in or visit.

The Council's beach and coastal property portfolio is highly significant in terms of extent, variety, importance and percentage of the overall number of Cornish beaches.

Whilst there may not be many statutory duties associated with beach management there are responsibilities that come with ownership such as a 'duty of care' that the Council has towards those who use publicly owned land and facilities.

In the right circumstances beaches can continue to add value to Cornwall's economy and reputation, but not necessarily through direct service delivery by the Council.

Therefore to understand better how continued quality beach management can be maintained in the current financial circumstances and to enable a consistent approach to managing or delivering services on Council beaches, it is necessary to develop a strategic overview to identify how this should be undertaken, to what standard and by whom.

It is worth highlighting at this point that this document provides, in the first instance, guidance for the Client's (Council's) approach for instructing

whoever is delivering beach management on the Council's behalf, specifically over the next 12 months. This has been done in the context of the budget for managing beaches and the resources available to deliver the service. Costs attributed to certain fundamental activities, such as beach cleaning, which in turn allows for the potential enhancement of beach management have been taken into account. A clearer understanding, over the next 12 months, of the available budget for the next four years will further identify the level of beach management the Council may wish to provide.

The intention of the draft strategy is to be a dynamic document for managing Cornwall Council's beaches providing minimum standards related to codes of practice, but identifying what could be done to achieve enhanced beach management should there be further resources available. The document does not include private beaches; it is more focussed on what is important to Cornwall Council at present. It will help to identify strategically where the Council places its future resources. It should be noted though that Cornwall Council does provide some services on privately owned beaches and an important consideration will be over which of these services, if any, the Council should continue to provide considering reduced budgets.

Introduction

The term "beach" in this draft strategy covers the (sand/rock) from Mean Low Water to above the Mean High Water, and to the base of cliffs including sand dunes and other infrastructure behind the beach, for instance car parks, buildings and green or natural habitats.

For purposes of the Draft Beach Management Strategy, beaches referred to are those that are owned, managed or leased by the Council. This represents around 40 beaches across Cornwall, all of varying hues – big sweeping bays to small coves, rural out the way places to urban/town beaches. As already stated beaches play a pivotal role in Cornwall's economic and social well being contributing to important areas in the creation of wealth, healthy lifestyles, landscape and biodiversity. The draft strategy recognises that these elements are fundamental to building on Cornwall's reputation as a place to live and visit, whilst mindful of the challenges' Cornwall faces in the future. Cornwall especially needs to be aware of its competitive edge over its neighbours and fellow competitors in Britain but also elsewhere in Europe as a holiday destination and as a place to do business.

The draft strategy presents a way of managing beaches that can be delivered through a particular model or framework. It does not mean that it will be delivered through the Council directly. To enable services to be delivered effectively and to provide a better perception and understanding of what beach management is, a common approach is required, ironing out some inconsistent practices which currently exist and is a legacy of the different Councils' approach. For instance the draft strategy will set out specific standards of delivery, for example how beaches are cleaned, how

often this is undertaken, to what extent this is done and whether it is the same for all beaches. These are some of the issues the draft strategy will address through the setting out of the way the Council will manage these assets effectively, efficiently, sustainably and affordably.

The draft strategy sets out a vision for beaches, underpinned by key outcomes. These outcomes will set out the way forward to achieve that vision.

It is a challenging period for local authorities at present to provide such services with diminishing budgets particularly as the economic recession is affecting investment. However, by setting out a realistic vision that accounts for financial factors, is creative and innovative in design, it is possible that the Council and its partners can achieve, and importantly continue to develop, an exciting and viable way of managing beaches for the future.

Future pressures and challenges:

Some of the overarching factors facing Cornwall and which will ultimately impact upon our beaches can be summarised as:

- Budgetary pressures – although the Council has set its budget it will decrease by 30% over the next four years. The impact of this is challenging and consequently it is necessary to investigate other ways of maintaining and enhancing the delivery of beach management.
- Climate change and sea level rise – may lead to increased occurrences of extreme weather events, as witnessed over the summers of 2007-2009, but also impacts on infrastructure through sea level rise, increased need for coastal protection and possible flooding. This needs planning for to mitigate against or provide post event management.
- Human pressures – Additional use of beaches provides economic benefits to Cornwall as a whole. However the effects of increased use, litter, damage to or overuse of infrastructure and facilities, increased demand and subsequent squeeze on space in the water and on the beach (carrying capacity), will all need to be managed by Cornwall Council with limited opportunities for increased income to the Council to pay for these services.

Vision

Recognise, maintain and where possible enhance the value of beaches and the contribution that they make to the economic, environmental and social well-being of Cornwall and its communities through effective and integrated management.

Aims of the Draft Beach Management Strategy:

Underpinning this statement are the aims of the draft strategy. These are set out as follows:

- a) To put in place appropriate integrated management techniques to sustain and enhance the economic, environmental and social value of beaches (see Appendix 5, 6).
- b) To encourage wider involvement and participation within beach management, so that it reflects a more local vision (see Appendix 5 – Themes 2; Appendix 6 – Themes 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 7).
- c) To promote the importance and raise awareness of beaches and their wider value to Cornwall; consequently defining Cornwall as an exemplar in beach management (see Appendix 5 – Themes 2.4, 2.5; Appendix 6 – Themes 7).
- d) To provide guidance, direction and the setting of standards for managing activities on beaches (see Appendix 5 – Themes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6; Appendix 6 – Themes 13).
- e) Improve the physical, intellectual and equality of access to beaches (see Appendix 5 – 4.2; Appendix 6 – 7.3, 7.5, 7.6).
- f) Make full use of beaches and related open space as a resource to promote physical activity and leisure and thus to improve health and wellbeing of residents and visitors (see Appendix 5 – Themes 2.4; Appendix 6 – Themes 7.8, 7.9, 9.3).
- g) Where appropriate to apply, improve opportunities for sensitive and sustainable income generation on beaches and their surrounds (see Appendix 5 – Themes 6; Appendix 6 – Themes 2, 12).

Analysing the evidence

Statutory obligations:

- Managing or owning beaches are not statutory obligations for local authorities. However, the Council has responsibilities for those open spaces it owns or manages. By owning land or a beach and providing for public use the Council has legal obligations in respect of site management e.g. ensuring that the health and safety of those who use the beach is considered and managed effectively, managing risk appropriately.
- The new EU Bathing Water Directive is due to affect upon beach owners by 2016; however, from 2012 it will be a legal requirement for information about water quality and potential sources of pollution to be displayed at beaches that have been designated as bathing

waters. This responsibility for providing this information is the beach owner's, or an appropriate authority.

- The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 introduced new obligations for the local authority, including an emphasis on Marine Planning up to high water mark. This will achieve a more integrated approach with land management and development policy already in place within the Council through its statutory role as the planning authority. The Act also places new duties for the Council with respect to Coastal Access provision together with introducing Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) which will be managed by the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on public authorities to "have regard" for conserving biodiversity in exercising its functions which includes property management.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Act 2010 place legal duties on the Council where it is a landowner. It also places a duty on the Council in the exercising of its functions to ensure that it does not adversely affect protected wildlife on sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation. There are many of these around the Cornish coast, including beaches.

Existing and Emerging Policies:

There are a number of strategies and legislation (local and national) that are in development with reference to beaches.

- **Green Infrastructure Strategy** - is an overarching document that the Council is producing. It's aimed at bringing together all the varied documents and strategies that are currently produced relating to Cornwall's green infrastructure. This includes beaches, waterways, play areas and open spaces and it will provide a single vision for all Green Infrastructure issues in one coherent document. The document will align these strategies identifying a range of delivery partners from across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It should give a clear and robust evidence base for future decisions about how and where the Council implements and manages new and existing green/blue/yellow infrastructure leading to better informed, joined up, timely and financially robust decisions being made.
- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy** – Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Health Authority currently has a Health and Wellbeing Strategy which includes actions identified through leisure and physical activity, to encourage the use of outdoor spaces, including beaches, for the promotion of health and well-being. Following the White Paper on NHS reforms, a new joint Health and Well-being strategy (JHWS) should be prepared by each area's statutory Health and Well-being

Board based on the needs identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Health and Well-being Boards will have the flexibility to include a wide range of health determinants in their strategy, including access to open spaces such as beaches. Within the public health White Paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People', beaches are recognised as examples of where the natural environment can be utilised to promote and enhance the health and well-being of people who have access to them. There is a weight of evidence supporting the benefits of using the natural environment to promote both physical and mental health (***Health, Place and Nature: How outdoor environments influence health and well-being: a knowledge base, Sustainable Development Commission, 2008***). The European Centre for Environment and Human Health is researching the benefits of using the natural environment, including the coastline, to benefit health and well-being. (***Depledge, M.H. and Bird, W. (2009) The Blue Gym: Health and well-being from our coasts***).

- **Cornwall Maritime Strategy 2011-2030** - is currently being prepared by the Council to help engage with all maritime sectors to promote more integrated management of the marine and coastal area. This document is being prepared alongside the Council's Core Strategy, Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Local Transport Plan and the Cornwall Local Development Framework to name but a few. There are some obvious linkages between the Maritime Strategy and the management of beaches and the impacts on the coastal areas particularly relating to access, planning, environmental impacts and local engagement.
- **Shoreline Management Plan 2** - guides and informs the view of coastal management in terms of planning and infrastructure development along the coast, accounting for the evolution of the coast through coastal processes. Sea/coastal defence policy will also look towards this document for guidance on the suitability of maintaining these coastal structures to protect infrastructure behind them.
- **Waste Strategy** - will focus on the Council's obligations for the management of waste and recycling; there needs to be an understanding on how this may affect beach cleaning and the policy for recycling activities on beaches. Beach waste is an area of work that will need careful consideration, especially disposal and recycling opportunities.
- **Landscape and biodiversity obligations** - Cornwall currently has 11 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and 61 Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) with coastal or marine elements for which the Council may have statutory responsibilities depending on ownership or management. The coastal area also supports Local Nature Reserves and an array of Biodiversity Action Plan species and

habitats for which Cornwall Council is committed to protecting and enhancing. There are 10 sections of the Cornish coast which are designated as part of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the new AONB Management Plan includes aims and objectives relating to the coast and each local section of the AONB.

- **Emergency Management** – Oil/Chemical Pollution incidents; the Council has an obligation through the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to help coordinate events through a Shoreline Response Centre and shoreline clean up.
- **Planning and development** – Cornwall Council is the local and strategic planning authority and development management will be guided through planning regulations, the Core Strategy, Parish and Town Plans and Local Development Frameworks. As stated previously new legislation through the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 will include an emphasis on marine planning at sea and up to the high water mark. There will be improved integration of the terrestrial and marine planning systems.

Beach Assessment:

The draft strategy provides for a review of what beach management the Council should undertake on private beaches, if any, and whether the Council should continue to lease beaches. It also includes what standards the Council adopts for management of beaches it retains responsibility for.

The following describes the approach that has been taken to develop the draft strategy and those things which will inform beach management. The Council is only one of many owners of beaches in Cornwall; other owners include the National Trust, Duchy of Cornwall, Ministry of Defence and a number of smaller landowners.

Beaches that the Council currently manage or have some ownership of:

- Council manages, leases or delivers services on 86 beaches.
- Of these, 40 are owned or leased by the Council, with the remaining 46 privately owned beaches having some management input from the Council.
- Of the 40, 20 are owned solely or in part by the Council, 11 leased out to private businesses, 9 leased in by the Council.

(See Appendix 1 – Cornwall Beaches Map, page 1)

As part of the evidence gathering for this draft strategy, maps have been prepared for each beach showing what area the Council owns/manages, whether it's leased out and identifies the other key Council owned assets that may surround the beach, for example car parks, public conveniences, cafes and other amenities (see Appendix 2 – Beach Maps, pages 2-38).

A Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of each beach has also been performed to understand better the beach asset and help suggest a particular course of action (see Appendix 3 – SWOT Analysis).

Lastly, a Scoring Matrix was developed, informed by the SWOT, to give a high level, focussed guide as to the level of significance to the Council that a particular beach might have, correlated against a number of criteria (see Appendix 4 – Scoring Matrix).

The outcome from the scoring matrix is that it enables the draft strategy to categorise beaches depending upon their levels of importance. These are simply indicated as high, medium or low. How to manage a particular beach depends on their category and therefore standards will be set differently to reflect this (see Appendix 5 – Beach Management Standards: Operational).

Different approaches on beaches:

As discussed previously the assessment of beaches provided a categorisation of the asset depending upon their strategic importance to the Council; this was simply indicated as high, medium or low. Different management approaches are categorised under these headings enabling standards to be set according to the unique characteristics and level of importance of the beach.

Options for management include:

- Relinquishing any leased in assets that are not deemed to be of high importance
- Seeking to devolve responsibility to others through leasing, asset transfer or, potentially, sale of non strategically important beaches.
- Keeping only those that are strategically important or where there are no alternative managers.

The strategic beaches, as identified in this draft strategy will be managed primarily through the Council to standards set by the Council.

The disposal of beaches to others, leasing or, in rare circumstances, sale, would only be applicable where a particular asset does not provide any strategic or future importance to the Council as identified through the options appraisal and after local consultation. The terms of any lease would incorporate some safeguards for management and include relevant standards required.

These different approaches are set out within the Appendices (see Appendix 7 – Management Approaches).

Implementation:

The onward process of implementing the draft strategy will be determined by the standards and strategic proposals detailed in Appendix 5 and 6. As part of the development of the draft strategy it has been essential to identify what costs would be required to deliver the service. Sufficient funding to cover the essential work of beach cleaning has been identified. Appendix 6 identifies other activities that could be undertaken if the resources were available, which would enhance beach management. Actions have been identified and prioritised. The emerging proposals, after further consultation with colleagues and local communities, would clearly set this out in more detail over the next 12 months once the new structures for service delivery have been refined and the available resources identified.

Conclusion:

This draft strategy recognises that beaches play an important role in the prosperity of Cornwall and that they need to be appropriately managed. The Council has a major stake in managing Cornwall's beaches and recognises that through its leadership it can provide common standards, embrace community needs and develop stronger market position for Cornwall.

This draft strategy sets out the means to achieve this, identifying appropriate standards for differing beach categories for instance as described in Defra's Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse. An implementation plan will need to be designed; setting out a programme identifying the scope of a Council funded Beach Management Service.

Once a suitable Beach Management Service is in place the strategic requirements can be developed and implemented involving local communities and partnership.

Ultimately by having this draft strategy in place the Council can be seen to be an exemplar in managing its beaches, providing wider benefits for Cornwall as a whole, encouraging greater involvement and access for those who visit and live in Cornwall. The draft strategy recognises that the third sector and other organisations will have an important role to play in the management of Cornwall's beaches.

Stakeholder consultation and engagement

During the evolution of these document a number of people and organisations were consulted over its structure and content. Services within Cornwall Council such as Property, Neighbourhood Services, Maritime and Public Health and Protection were also contacted.

Key individuals within VisitCornwall and Cornwall's Primary Care Trust were also engaged over the direction and wider implications. A wider public consultation will be advantageous to highlight the work being carried out and the potential opportunity for feeding into this process. Community

engagement and consultation will be integral to the draft strategy as it moves forward and begins to address site specific issues.

Strategic aims and objectives

It has been identified that one of the key outcomes from the draft strategy is the development of standards for beach management over and above those identified within Defra's Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse. There are however a number of other important outputs that will emerge from the draft strategy in order to achieve the vision.

These will require description and an identified method of delivery to enable and enhance the development of beach management further. Some of these outputs will be addressed by the management standards as set out in Appendix 5, but there will be some that will require a strategic, forward planning approach linking into the key outputs set out below (see Appendix 6 – Beach Management Standards: Strategic Proposals).

Actions:

- **An Effective Management Framework** – there is a need to establish a specialist beach management team, probably integrated within a wider Council funded Countryside team, delivering a variety of services on publicly owned open space across Cornwall. One of the ways of dealing with the specifics and differences of each beach will be to develop individual site specific beach management plans. These documents describe specific actions required to look after individual beach assets for the future and will be the main focus for enhancing the management of the site further and understanding the resources required. They will also be an important tool in consultation and engagement of wider stakeholders and groups. This will be responsibility of the Transportation, Waste and Environment (TWE) Client primarily.
- **The Establishment of a Beach Management Working Group** - given the wide range of interests that exist within different Departments of the Council, an internal beach coordination group should be formed to ensure full inclusion. This group would be made up of specific officers and relevant Members and involving external organisations when required. This would ensure a more joined-up approach across the various departments and services. This will be the responsibility of the TWE Client together with the Council's Provider(s).
- **Utilising Beaches to Enhance, Increase Health and Wellbeing opportunities** - the draft strategy takes account of how the management of beaches will promote health and wellbeing, through improved access, health promoting activities, targeted activities for specific groups (children and young people, disadvantaged, disabled etc.) and promotion / links to active travel. This could be a cross

cutting service approach incorporating Client, Children Schools and Families, Adult Care and Support, PCT, Leisure Services. It should also links to existing programmes such as the Blue Gym and other Third Sector initiatives and volunteering activities that promote the use of beaches for health improvement. The BeachCare programme is a good example of how to engage and encourage people to access beaches through activities such as beach cleaning.

- **Providing Effective Beach Waste Management** – the Council will ensure that beaches are regularly cleaned to the standards identified for them. The recommended approach will be for litter picking on beaches to be undertaken by hand (in the majority of cases) to minimise negative environmental impacts on the beach. Links between street cleaning teams and wider waste management is the logical approach to reducing conflict or problems that may arise with different organisations undertaking different aspects of these roles. Monitoring of material, through survey work probably via the voluntary sector, will be essential to help maintain an informed view of the volumes and sources of beach waste as this may lead to better ways of managing the asset. However, waste storage and transfer will need to be addressed, especially during the busy holiday periods and with access difficult in some areas. The specifications for beach waste management according to the identified standards will be included in the contract specification for waste and street cleaning. Enhanced beach cleaning, beach litter monitoring, the removal of hazardous waste and the management of “strandings” will not be included in the contract and will, instead, be undertaken by the Council’s Provider (possibly with volunteers, except in the removal of hazardous waste which would be the fire brigade) which will also monitor the quality of beach litter collection. Beach recycling is also an area that should be encouraged but will be done so through the Provider and local communities. This will be the responsibility of the TWE Client and the Council’s Provider(s).
- **Enabling and Encouraging Community Engagement** – for many, beaches are a key contributor to the quality of life that is synonymous with living in Cornwall. Local communities should therefore have an opportunity to influence the way the Council’s beaches are looked after. Setting up Beach Fora where there is a clear demand or requirement, will enable wider and more local views to be expressed and ensure that users have a channel to feed back concerns or issues over beach management (it may also link to the Maritime Strategy which is aiming to create a Cornwall Maritime Forum). Beach Fora are a useful means for the promotion, updating and the raising awareness of issues relating to the beach and links into the beach management planning process. Supporting initiatives such as ‘Beach Care’ and other community programmes is also critical if the beaches are to be managed efficiently. Volunteers are an important resource and should have an opportunity to become actively involved in beach management. This will be the

responsibility of the Council's Provider(s) and the Beach Management Working Group.

- **Managing Risk on Beaches** – the RNLI provide risk assessments for the activity of lifeguarding on beaches as part of their contractual role as a beach safety provider. The Council is also responsible for ensuring that wider beach safety risk assessments are undertaken for each beach and that all Council owned beaches are inspected and monitored regularly. This will ensure that potential litigation as a result of accidents on the beach will be minimised. This will be the responsibility of the TWE Client and Provider(s).
- **Effective and Appropriate Delivery of Duty of Care** – the Council currently developing a Service Level Agreement with the RNLI, to provide beach lifeguarding on beaches in Cornwall. Of the 55 beaches across the Cornwall, 25 are owned or leased by Cornwall Council. In addition to the RNLI some beaches benefit from the 'Beach Beat' scheme whereby Police Community Support Officers have a physical presence on the beach in order to maintain public order. The overall responsibility for monitoring the RNLI contract is with the TWE Client.
- **Provision of an Appropriate Level of Public Rescue Equipment** - the Council has a number of sites located around the coast where it provides and maintains Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) ranging from lifebuoys, signage, emergency telephones and other rescue aids. This equipment is maintained and checked following national guidelines. The TWE Client has initiated a review to ensure that all the equipment is standardised throughout Cornwall. In addition it is currently reviewing the question of ownership of the PRE with a view to transferring equipment on private and to the appropriate landowners. This will be the responsibility of the TWE Client, Provider(s) and the Beach Management Working Group.
- **Enhancing Beach Infrastructure** – beach infrastructure is a key element to providing an enjoyable experience for those that use beaches. Public conveniences, access opportunities for all, information points, car parks, litter and dog bins and seating areas are examples. There may well be ways of generating more of a resource for ensuring this infrastructure is kept to an appropriate quality, sponsorship and hypothecated budgets have already been identified elsewhere in this document. There is a clear need to identify where capital investment is needed to meet the beach management standards that have been identified within this document and to introduce a rolling programme of improvements funded through a variety of sources including the Council's own Capital Programme. This will be the responsibility of the TWE Client, Provider(s) and the Beach Management Working Group.

- **Increasing Resources Through Income Generation** – to enhance the delivery of beach management and the opportunity to deliver a more comprehensive service, new commercial opportunities, where appropriate, should be explored. An example of this approach is through leasing out beaches as identified in the draft strategy. Other income opportunities possible from Council owned beaches include managing commercial water activity users (such as surf schools through the Waves Surf Licence Scheme currently undertaken in the north Cornwall area) and licensing sales from the beach - ice cream for instance. These approaches will have to be balanced against over commercialisation which might negatively affect some beaches. The responsibility for this will be through the TWE Client, Provider(s) together with the Beach Management Working Group which will ensure that a consistent approach is developed.
- **Leasing beaches** - the Council currently leases out some of its beaches to private businesses. This approach is particularly useful in generating income for the site and limiting the Council's liability. However, there are different types of agreements in place which are inconsistent and these need to be reviewed and standardised. Also the income generated by these leases often doesn't cover the cost of managing services, particularly where the Council may still be providing lifeguarding or beach cleaning. The Council also leases in a number of beaches from landowners such as the Duchy of Cornwall. Again there is an inconsistent approach to why these beaches are leased in, with the implications being the Council takes on the responsibility and liabilities that comes with managing the site. The recommendation would be to review all existing leases, relinquishing leases where appropriate, and on the leasing out of beaches, improve the levels of income generated and making sure the lessee provides certain services to set standards. This would be the responsibility of the TWE Client, Property Services and the Beach Management Working Group.
- **Maximising Other Resource Opportunities** – given the undoubted importance of beaches to the overall economy of Cornwall and the economy of the local area where the beach is situated, a way of paying for good beach management could come from the use of the fee earning facilities that are allied to it, such as car parks. It may be possible to have a percentage income ring fenced for beach management and the management of other beach related assets. In addition there are many activities which are a part of good beach management which could be funded by others through sponsorship, for instance beach recycling. This will be the responsibility of the TWE Client primarily.
- **Introducing an Appropriate Level of Nationally Recognised Quality Standards and Accreditation** – there are a small number of Blue Flag beaches at present in Cornwall. This award is an internationally recognised accreditation and is a useful tool in

highlighting the quality of Cornwall's beaches including the appropriate level of management. Blue Flags have a role and should be retained where possible. There is however a need for Cornwall to maintain its position as a key destination and this may lie in a broader approach to accreditation whereby all Council managed beaches can be recognised under one quality standard, for example through Keep Britain Tidy's Quality Coast Award, which incorporates Blue Flags within it. Such external accreditation helps to improve marketing opportunities. This will need liaison with Keep Britain Tidy and VisitCornwall. There is a cost involved in achieving this, a cost which could be met through sponsorship. This will be the responsibility of the Client and the Beach Management Working Group which will need to include VisitCornwall.

- **Bathing water quality** – Cornwall Council currently co-ordinates a Cornwall wide partnership between the Public Health Protection and Environment Services of Cornwall Council, the Environment Agency, South West Water, the Public Health Protection Agency and Surfers Against Sewage. This group develops an agreed, coordinated means of managing and, advising the public of, any bathing water quality incidents on beaches in Cornwall. A protocol has been developed to set out the role and responsibilities of those involved by acting on bathing water quality issues which include the RNLI, Council operational staff and Public Health Protection Officers. Incidents are updated and displayed on the Council's beaches website. Given the increasing importance of bathing water quality, the Council's existing Duty of Care and its responsibilities for the protection of health in Cornwall and for the management of bathing water on beaches it has responsibility for, this group will need to continue to develop and contribute to the overall good management of Council owned beaches. This will be the responsibility of the TWE Client, the Council's Provider(s), Council Members and Council partners within the Bathing Water Quality Group.
- **Ensuring Appropriate Environmental Management** – beaches are not just economic and recreational assets, they play an important part in the overall quality of Cornwall's natural environment. Improving biodiversity and habitat management should be a fundamental part of beach management. This responsibility should be a consideration in any beach management action. For instance the beach strandline is recognised as being an important ecological habitat, but excessive seaweed deposition can be off-putting to beach users. Consequently the Beach Management Plan provides a way of developing a policy approach to ensuring that beaches can be managed sensitively. Clearly setting out the Council's requirements for sound environmental management of its beaches ensures that it adheres to its responsibilities to take account of biodiversity as well as clarifies what it does and why it does it to others. This will be the responsibility of the Council's TWE Client, Provider(s) and Beach Management Working Group.

- **Managing Pollution Events and Establishing Environmental Resilience** – impacts of an oil pollution incident on Cornwall's coasts could be potentially disastrous and requires an effective approach to managing these types of events. The Council's Emergency Planning Team would co-ordinate any shoreline response with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Environment Group providing advice to any Salvage Control Unit (SCU) and/or Shoreline Management Group (SMG), but this should be linked to any outside contractors or organisations providing beach management on Cornwall's beaches. Such action is likely not to be confined to only those beaches that Cornwall Council owns. It will have a much wider effect requiring a co-ordinated approach. This will be the responsibility of the Council's Emergency Planning Service, the Council's Provider(s) and the Beach Management Working Group.
- **Managing Demand** – the beach provides opportunities for a number of activities such as surfing, organised beach events as well as more informal use. However, with increased demand for usage it requires direction and guidance to manage and to help reduce conflict whilst protecting beach users and to ensure that the Council complies with its health and safety obligations whilst preventing over exploitation of the natural asset. This will be the responsibility of the Client, the Council's Provider(s) and the Beach Management Working Group.
- **Managing of Private Beaches** – the Council currently operates and/or delivers services on 46 private beaches throughout Cornwall. By so doing the Council expends tax payer's money on private land with undefined benefits and often with no written legal agreements in place. It would seem prudent to withdraw services at this point to allow decreasing budgets to be allocated to the Council's own land assets, thus improve resources and service delivery on those beaches the Council does have responsibility for. Options include ceasing the cleaning of beaches (private beach owners could use the Council's contractor or Provider if they so wished), assessing toilet provision (through the Public Convenience review) and transfer to others if appropriate. The suitability of ongoing provision of services should be evaluated to assess the Council's potential liability. This is the responsibility of the TWE Client and the Beach Management Working Group.
- **Reviewing Beach Byelaws** – there are a number of Seashore Byelaws that can be adopted by the Council to cover specific activities on beaches. This is sometimes a requirement where there are particular problems that cannot be resolved on a voluntary basis. However, it must be remembered that byelaws really only work where there is a means to monitor and carryout enforcement. The improvement of the effectiveness of these byelaws will require a review and where appropriate and practicable, adoption of new, or continuation of only some existing ones. At present a number of

beaches owned by the Council have byelaws restricting access to the water when the Lifeguard Service Red Flag is in use and for small leisure craft - these are regulated by the Council; the Council also has in place a byelaw for regulating commercial water activity provision and legislation protecting the coastline from the removal of objects such as sand or other natural material. This would be the responsibility of the TWE Client and the Legal Service.

Performance and risk management

The main risk is if there's a delay in developing and delivering a good standard service on Council owned beaches, which will have a detrimental effect to the natural environment, reducing the quality of the experience for users and visitors. This would have the consequence of reducing Cornwall's economic prosperity, environmental and social wellbeing.

Communicating the strategy

A wider consultation process would need to be undertaken to take on the views of the particular stakeholders and the general public. This approach should be informed by Members and Senior Management. If this is the case further work will need to be carried out to develop a communication plan highlighting matters such as press releases, consultation and any other processes to enable wider and further discussions.

Evaluation and review

Ongoing but to be completed by 31/03/2012

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Transport, Waste and Environment

31/03/11

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Cornwall Council owned/leased/managed beaches map

Appendix 2: Individual beach maps

Appendix 3: Beach SWOT analysis

Appendix 4: Beach scoring matrix/level of importance

Appendix 5: Beach management standards – operational

Appendix 6: Beach management standards – strategic proposals

Appendix 7: Management Approaches