

## **Quality Coast Award 2010**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Councillor Cath Giel, Councillor Hugh Branney  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Julie Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy  
**REPORT AUTHOR:** Julie Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy

### **Summary and Recommendation:**

This report sets out the detail and preparations to apply for Quality Coast Awards for the four Copeland bathing beaches.

Executive are requested to:

- a) note the developments and action planning to improve disabled access in the first two years of successful Award applications; and,
- b) agree to Copeland Borough Council leading the application for Quality Coast Award for Haverigg, Silecroft, Seascale and St Bees beaches on the understanding that access improvements as part of the Award requirements will be developed using external funding.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In 2008/9 an NDA graduate placement undertook a six month project on Copeland's beaches assessing and preparing for the Council and its local partners to apply for Quality Coast Awards. It was decided not to apply for the 2009 Awards but to prepare to apply for the 2010 Awards.
- 1.2 The assessments for all four beaches in 2008/9 set out clearly the actions needed to enable successful application for the Quality Coast Award. The successful Awards for the 2010 bathing season are announced by May 2010 and any conditions, such as improved disabled access are set within a minimum 2 year timetable.

## **2. ARGUMENT**

- 2.1 The four quality beaches are used by both local people and visitors to the area. Each has unique qualities and is linked with leisure activities. Two of our beaches in 2009 were listed as having good water quality by the Marine Conservation Society. Obtaining Quality Coast Awards for all our beaches would be a positive step to a) support the refreshed Western Lake District Tourism Partnership activities to attract and increase visitors to the Copeland area and b) deliver positive promotional support to the

Energy Coast low carbon sustainable environmental actions in support of the economic and social well being of our residents.

- 2.2 Discussions with Keep Britain Tidy who administer and assess the Quality Coast Awards in England have confirmed that all four beaches are eligible to apply for Category B Bathing Beaches.
- 2.3 The council has set out its commitments to tourism development through its continued support for the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership and through the allocation of LABGI resource to help progress initiatives such as the Quality Coast Award applications.
- 2.4 An assessment of each beach against the award criteria including disabled access sets out a programme of action for each beach:
  - Local beach advisory group – these voluntary arrangements will be led by local parish / community groups in each beach area;
  - Updated detail on existing local beach signage – Copeland Council will undertake this activity;
  - Dog Policy clear for each beach and enforced;
  - Beach cleaning and maintenance;
  - 2 year action plan to improve disabled facilities – Council officer will assist the voluntary beach advisory groups to collectively apply for external resources to enable improvements.

### **3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 All four beaches are recommended to apply for the 2010 quality coast awards. The Council is being asked to enable this Award application with full engagement from each of the beach advisory groups to ensure local ownership in the delivery of the Award. Each of the beaches will be overseen by a voluntary advisory beach group which will also advise/lead on any local access developments linked to the Quality Coast Award.
- 3.2 The Council is requested to set out a named beach liaison contact for these groups. In line with the tourist nature of the Quality Coast Initiative it is proposed that this be allocated within the Council's Economic Development Team.
- 3.3 The beach assessments undertaken by local disability groups recommend improvements to disabled access (see appendix B). The Quality Beach Project Board, which has been meeting over the past year, will be making a collective funding application to enable beach and disabled access improvements in line with the Quality Beach Award best practice. Discussions are ongoing with the LDNP regarding Silecroft beach accessible toilets and wider environmental improvements on this and the Council has undertaken a condition survey as the facility owners,

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The Executive are requested to support the recommendation to apply for the Quality Coast Award 2010 for the four Copeland beaches: Haverigg, Silecroft, Seascale and St Bees. The deadline for applications is 11 December 2009 and the council will fund, using existing LABGI, the applications and updated signage.
- 4.2 The Council will continue to play a facilitation and development role in enabling the Quality Coast Award, if successful, to be delivered over its three year period including a) assisting the development of environmental and access local partnership schemes and bids for external funding; b) offering a named officer as quality beach liaison; and c) providing maintenance and enforcement in support of our policies, including a dog policy.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)**

- 5.1 The Council Executive agreed at its meeting in June 2009 to allocate a sum of LABGI funding to Tourist activity and delegate the final decision making on the detail to the Head of Development Strategy in consultation with the Portfolio holder, Cllr Cath Giel. £5,708 has been allocated from this LABGI allocation to cover a) the cost of all four Copeland beaches applying for the Award (£425 per beach) and b) to replace the existing signs at each beach to comply with the Award conditions (£4,008 for all signs).
- 5.2 The voluntary beach advisory groups are being developed through the local parish and town councils.
- 5.3 Beach cleaning and maintenance arrangements will remain unchanged initially. Should enforcement requirements increase external funding will be secured via the local voluntary beach advisory groups.
- 5.4 The Council will work in partnership with the beach advisory groups and other key stakeholders in the beach communities including the Lake District National Park to identify and obtain external funding to deliver specific access improvements as recommended in the action plans at appendix B.

## **6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The local management of the beaches will be undertaken by the voluntary beach advisory group in each area. Help with fundraising for disability access and in managing future development will be provided by officers.
- 6.2 Development of the second generation Shoreline Management Plan will identify long term aspirations for the coast.

## **7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN**

- 7.1 The Corporate Plan recognises and enables greater access to our quality natural environment for residents and visitors.

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – QCA Accreditation Requirements for Category B Award

Appendix B - Action plans for each beach

**List of Background Documents:** Quality Coast Award application guidance, Quality Beach Assessment 2008/9.

**List of Consultees:** Cllr Cath Giel, Cllr Hugh Branney, Cllr George Clements, Cllr Eileen Eastwood, Cllr Doug Wilson, Cllr Norman Clarkson, Corporate Team, Janice Carrol, Brian Crawford, Peter Rand.

### **CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES**

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed . This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Supports
Impact on Sustainability	Enables effective use and care of our natural beaches
Impact on Rural Proofing	Supports local interests and visitor potential at our beaches in rural setting
Health and Safety Implications	Supports quality and safe beaches
Project and Risk Management	Supports local voluntary activity and responsibility
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Quality Beaches enable access for all.
Children and Young Persons Implications	Enables and recognises quality leisure natural environments in the borough.
Human Rights Act Implications	Support access for all
Monitoring Officer Comments	No comments in respect of the application for the award itself. In respect of the ongoing work of the

	voluntary groups the Council needs to assure itself as to whether the risk of any claims is covered by its current insurance policies.
Section 151 Officer Comments	Expenditure in respect of the application and signage will be met by the LABGI allocation.

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision    NO

## Appendix A

QCA Accreditation Requirements for Category B Award	
<b>Accreditation Requirements before Award is made</b>	
At least mandatory water quality	
Provision of public information on the water quality at the award beach – ideally permanent signage informing the public that bathing water quality may be lower after periods of heavy rainfall. This should be supplemented by temporary signage in extreme circumstances on or at the beach	
Car Parking	
Safe pedestrian access to the beach	
An assessment of the safety/ease of access to the beach by prams, pushchairs and people with accessible requirements and an action plan to deal with any issues raised	
The beach should be monitored and cleansed as necessary to ensure litter does not reach unacceptable levels	
Litter bins should be provided and serviced regularly	
Dog Control Policy. This is to be properly managed and enforced. If this is not already in place, then evidence should need to be in place within 18 months of gaining the award. Dog bins and appropriate signage to be in place in the meantime	
Provision of accessible toilet facilities is desirable and if present should be clean and well-maintained	
Any buildings and structures should be well – maintained	
Emergency Action Plan including pollution incidents	
Up-to-date risk assessment and control measures implemented	
Life guarding strongly recommended or a case to be made explaining why it is not necessary	
Central information point in place with beach map, safety information, code of conduct, and contact details, regularly updated	
<b>Must be undertaken during 3 year award period</b>	
If a discharge point is present, signage should be in place to state that water quality may not be the same as the beach	
Beach should apply to be listed as an EU Designated bathing water	
Provision of an accessibility statement and supporting improvement plan where applicable	
Proactive approach to litter management	
The visitor capacity of the site should be considered and steps taken to cope with the peak times of year	
If the beach is covered by a conservation designation, a management plan should be in place in agreement with the relevant body	

## **Appendix B      QCA Action Plans for each beach**

### **1      *St Bees***

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>
Enforcement of Littering	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Enforcement of Dog Policy	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Improve disabled access	Smooth slipways and paths that give access to beach promenade; Provide access to the beach from the promenade via a ramp that meet DDA requirements
Update permanent signs	Remove Seaside Awards logo, make new maps with up-to-date information,
Set up beach advisory group	Sent out invitations to local business owners, parish councils,

### **2      *Seascale***

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>
Enforcement of Littering	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Enforcement of Dog Policy	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Improve disabled access	Modify disabled parking lines to meet DDA requirements; Provide adequate disabled toilets by widening the ramp for wheel chairs and providing an alarm cord that alerts either the shop or people outside
Update permanent signs	Remove Seaside Awards logo, make new maps with up-to-date information
Set up beach advisory group	Send out invitations to local business owners, sports associations, and parish councils

### **3      *Silecroft***

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>

Enforcement of Littering	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Enforcement of Dog Policy	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Update permanent signs	Remove Seaside Awards logo, make new maps with up-to-date information
Set up beach advisory group	Sent out invitations to local business owners, parish councils, and the LDNPA
Provide disabled toilets	Collaborate with the LDNPA to provided these

#### 4 ***Haverigg***

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>
Enforcement of Littering	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Enforcement of Dog Policy	Give enforcement powers to beach cleaner
Update permanent signs	Remove Seaside Awards logo, make new maps with up-to-date information, need to update permanent sign at the beach regarding how to phone for help as this is out of date
Set up beach advisory group	Sent out invitations to local business owners, parish council, residents association, and Inshore Rescue Team
Complaints have been raised about the rubbish around the recycling area and so this used be moved to the rugby club parking area about 300 yards away to allow better supervision of the recycling bins	Contact owners of the rugby about the recycling bin and to discuss forming part of the BAG