



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Swanage Beach Coastal Protection Scheme

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

Project

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

The primary objective is to maintain the standard of protection established by the 2005/06 beach recharge scheme, which is now under threat due to asset deterioration and declining beach levels. Without intervention, over 110 properties and vital public amenities are at risk. Renourishing the beach to established levels mitigates the risk of coastal flooding and erosion.

In addition to the primary objective, secondary objectives, which have lower weighting to the primary objective have been defined as follows.

- Optimise the frequency, timing, quantity, and source of future beach recharge to provide the best value for money, reduce whole life cost and carbon.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Support the tourism and economy of the town by providing the opportunity to improve the amenities of the beach.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

The scheme aligns with national and regional strategies, including the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020), the Poole and Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan (2011), and the Poole Bay FCERM Strategy (2014). These documents advocate for a "Hold the Line" policy, emphasising the need to maintain existing defences and adapt to climate change. The Swanage Local Plan (2017) and the Dorset Council Local Plan (2021) further reinforce the importance of protecting the town's coastline, which is vital to its tourism-driven economy. The project also seeks to align with the Bournemouth,

Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council's beach recharge programme to optimize resources and reduce costs.

Historically, Swanage has implemented various coastal defences since the early 20th century, including seawalls, timber groynes, and beach nourishment. However, recent assessments show that many of these structures are nearing the end of their service life. The 2023 asset condition survey by JBA Consulting revealed that without active intervention, the seawall could fail as early as 2029, leading to accelerated erosion and significant damage to the town. The "Do Minimum" scenario highlights the inadequacy of current defences, projecting severe shoreline retreat and infrastructure loss over the next century.

Environmental, heritage, and visual considerations are integral to the scheme. The project area intersects with multiple designated ecological and heritage sites, requiring careful planning and mitigation. Preliminary assessments indicate that, with appropriate measures, the scheme will not significantly impact these sensitive areas. Additionally, the project offers opportunities to enhance the seafront's visual appeal and public access, aligning with the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment?
(e.g national statistics, employee data):

2026 – JBA Consulting produced a Outline Business Case – Compiles all available data, options assessments and financial information to provide analysis, recommendations, benefits, outcomes and future provision on all aspects of the project for an external funding request.

2020 - Beach Management Plan outlines the action plan to maintain the standard of protection to manage coastal erosion risk and flooding.

2023 – JBA consulting asset condition survey outlined the need for intervention.

7. What did this tell you?

The project is necessary to maintain the standard of protection to manage coastal erosion risk and flooding.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

Consultants, officers, senior management, Cllrs, neighbouring authorities, Environment Agency, Natural England, Marine Management Organisation, Swanage Town Council

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

No

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqlA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqlA, please answer the following question:

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require a EqlA because (provide details):

The project does not require and EqlA because the aim and objectives are to provide a standard of protection for all. The project is to maintain the standard of protection to manage coastal erosion risk and flooding.

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

Positive Impact	• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	• protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	• no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	• not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age		
Disability		

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Care Experience		
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity		
Marriage or civil partnership		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Race and Ethnicity		
Religion and belief		
Sex (consider men and women)		
Sexual orientation		
People with caring responsibilities		
Rural isolation		
Socio-economic deprivation		
Single parents		
Armed forces communities		

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Potential impact change with final design	Review EqIA impacts following detailed design. Estimated date January 2027.	Adam Steele	

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Adam Steele

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Adam Steele

Date of completion: 30th January 2026

Version Number: 2

EqIA review date: 30th January 2026

Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palferman-Kay