



impact SEAFORD

ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2021





The purpose of Impact Seaford

is to provide a framework for joint working to develop and implement projects that will deliver the Seaford Vision.

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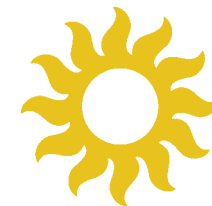
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The Seaford Vision

“By 2030 Seaford will have retained its strong sense of community, made greater use of its seafront and heritage assets, including conserving and enhancing the character of its Heritage Coast, as well as promoting sympathetic development respecting the tranquil character of its historic nature to improve the economic, environment and social well-being of residents and visitors alike.

Seaford’s location is a gateway to the South Downs National Park. Its green open spaces, seafront and spectacular views will have been retained, protected, enhanced and promoted, to benefit future generations. An improved transport infrastructure will have made the seafront, town centre, railway stations and outlying areas of the town readily accessible for all.



Expanding the rich and diverse mix of independent shops, light industrial services, businesses, community and tourist facilities while simultaneously addressing the shortfall in visitor accommodation, will have widened the town’s economic base.”



Information and Evidence Base

Coastal Community Team

Impact Seaford was formed in 2013 and the government awarded Coastal Community Team status in September 2015. A Coastal Community Team is a local partnership consisting of the local authority (Lewes District Council) and a range of people and business interests from the community that have an understanding of the issues facing that area and can develop an effective forward strategy for a place.

Accountable Body

Lewes District Council is the Accountable Body for Impact Seaford and its status as a government-approved Coastal Community Team.

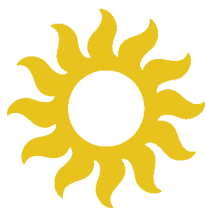
Impact Seaford is administered by Lewes District Council's Regeneration team, and all Board Members can answer queries relating to the work of the Team.

The Delivery Board

Impact Seaford is governed by a Delivery Board comprised of local stakeholders and is chaired by an elected representative on behalf of Seaford Town Council.

The Board (as at July 2021):

- ☀ Councillor Sylvia Dunn
Seaford Town Councillor and Chair of Impact Seaford
- ☀ Councillor Christine Brett
Lewes District Councillor
- ☀ Councillor Rupert Simmons
East Sussex County Councillor
- ☀ Town Clerk
Seaford Town Councillor
- ☀ Head of Regeneration
Lewes District Council & Eastbourne Borough Council
- ☀ Economic Projects Manager
East Sussex County Council
- ☀ Seaford Community Partnership
- ☀ Seaford Chamber of Commerce
- ☀ Seaford Youth Forum



Stakeholders

Together, the Impact Seaford Board consults with local residents and businesses to make the Seaford Vision a reality. Board Members report back progress on key project priorities to a wide range of stakeholders including:

Seaford Town Council
Lewes District Council
East Sussex County Council
SDNPA
Seaford Chamber of Commerce
Seaford Community Partnership
Seaford Youth Forum
Environment Agency
Local residents
Local schools
Local retailers and businesses

Background

There has been a settlement on the site of present-day Seaford since ancient times, and the present town itself has a substantial and varied history. In medieval times, Seaford had a thriving harbour and became a limb of the prestigious Cinque Ports system during the thirteenth century.

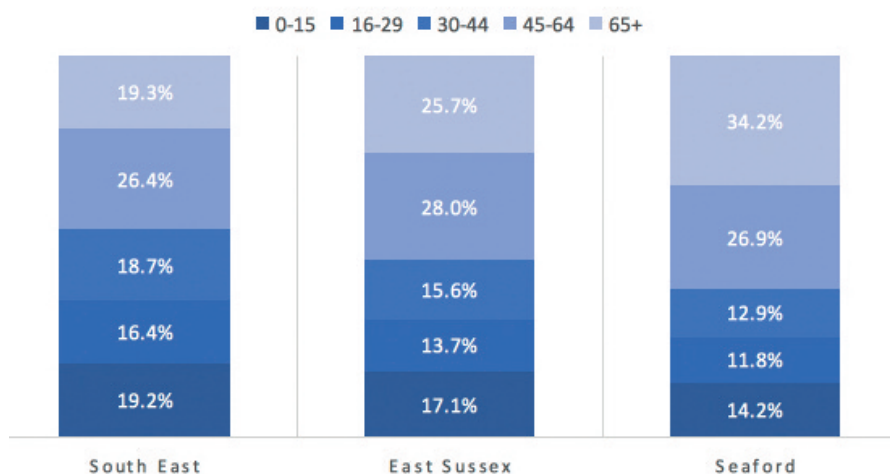
Towards the end of the sixteenth century, however, a major storm diverted the course of the River Ouse to Newhaven and dramatically altered Seaford's topography. This led to the silting up of the river and left the town without a viable harbour. It took until the mid-19th century, when the new London-Brighton-South Coast railway began bringing visitors to the town, for Seaford to enjoy a sustained period of prosperity.

Today, Seaford is a vibrant seaside town with a small but well-functioning and locally serving town centre, as well as a strong heritage with 39 listed buildings in the town centre alone. 2020 has been a particularly challenging year – not just for Seaford, but globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a radical shift in consumer behaviour and economic patterns, creating significant challenges but also a real opportunity to maximise the benefits of economic activity for our local residents. This increased focus on local activity fits strongly with the climate emergency and the desire for Lewes District to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Community Context

Seaford has an estimated population of 24,534 and is the largest town by population across the Lewes District. Seaford is made up of five District wards: North, South, East, West and Central. It has nine Town Council wards. Despite a growing attraction for families, Seaford has an ageing population with more than one-third being of retirement age (65+). This poses challenges (such as demands on healthcare and supporting infrastructure) as well as opportunities (the spending power of the 'grey pound'). This ageing demographic structure does mean that Seaford has proportionally fewer residents of working age.

Seaford Demographics Comparison



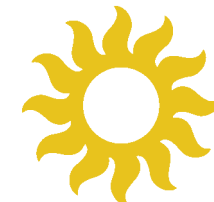
Alongside this ageing demographic profile, Seaford faces a considerable challenge due to a restricted catchment area. This severely limits development opportunities with, on one side, the English Channel and on the other, the South Downs National Park. This can manifest itself in community tensions, particularly where development proposals may not be ideally located. The recently adopted Seaford Neighbourhood Plan (February 2020) has provided a community-led response to ensure that local planning offers a strong fit with community objectives.

Economic Context

Whilst Seaford is the largest town in Lewes District, it has a comparatively small working age population. Just over half (51.67%) of the resident population is aged 16-64, which equates unfavourably with the wider District (57.14%), the South East region (61.49%) and England (62.61%). Despite this, Lewes District as a whole has a net outflow of commuters for work purposes, which highlights a lack of suitable employment prospects for the District – including its main towns, such as Seaford. The long-term effect of COVID-19 on commuting patterns is not yet known, although Seaford has limited provision of employment space and will be impacted to a lesser degree than some other coastal towns.

Aside from the town centre, the Seaford economy is focused on the Cradle Hill Industrial Estate. Cradle Hill covers 3.9ha and is the largest employment site in the town, located on the north-eastern edge of its urban area. Cradle Hill offers a range of relatively low-cost small and medium-sized light industrial units, with reasonably good strategic road access and regular bus services.

The Seaford economy has a reasonable degree of diversification, with the highest proportions of jobs in areas such as Health and Social Work.



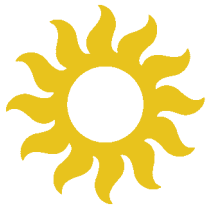
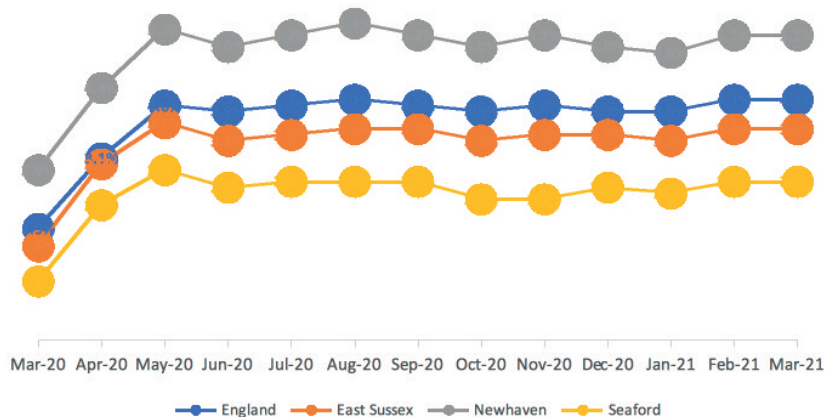
Analysis

Unemployment

Whilst unemployment figures follow wider trends, Seaford remains in a comparatively strong position.

Fluctuations in benefit claims follow a similar pattern for the coastal towns in the Lewes District and align nationally with reporting trends associated with the COVID-19 pandemic; they are also linked to the government's furlough and self-employment schemes. Further fluctuations are anticipated following the retirement of the furlough and self-employment schemes and the introduction of initiatives such as the Kickstart Scheme delivered under the government's Plan for Jobs programme.

UC/JSA Claimants per capita (March 2020 - March 2021)



STRENGTHS

Attractive physical environment
Range of recreational facilities
Good rail and bus services
Range of independent retailers
Strong community leadership and engagement, with well-supported Neighbourhood Plan
Good quality broadband to facilitate home working

WEAKNESSES

Weak linkages between gateways, the town centre and seafront
Ageing demographics
Restricted catchment area
Lack of development sites
Pockets of low earnings and deprivation
Few major employers / chain retailers that will create significant numbers of new jobs
Lack of visitor accommodation

OPPORTUNITIES

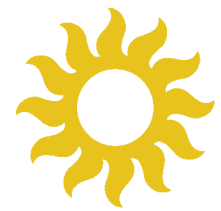
Seafront masterplanning
Development of visitor economy including better links with the South Downs National Park, as well as USP of Coastguard Cottages/Seven Sisters as a world-famous view
New employment-generating development
Enhanced directional signage for visitors
New housing developments

THREATS

Environmental risks (e.g. flooding and coastal erosion)
Continued tensions between residential and employment-generating development, as well as age-restricted residential development
Resistance to change
Impact of COVID-19 on economic and social wellbeing



Delivering the Vision



Making it Happen

This Economic Action Plan seeks to pull together and translate joint working into action to place a focus on delivery at a local level. This will ensure delivery closely matches local needs and aspirations and involves local residents and businesses, building on Impact Seaford's achievements since 2013. This Economic Action Plan will seek to support wider economic recovery, whilst addressing the climate emergency and maximising local benefit of economic activity for Seaford – helping to build the wealth of our community.

Achievements to Date

The Shoal

Originally the idea of a group of volunteers, the Seaford Community Partnership, the Shoal project was taken on board by Impact Seaford. The partnership between organisations produced a wonderful work of art on Seaford seafront.



Seaford Neighbourhood Plan

After nearly 4 years' work by volunteers, the Seaford Community Partnership, and Seaford Town Council, supported by Impact Seaford, the Seaford Neighbourhood Plan was adopted following a local referendum. (89% said Yes to the Plan). Further details in section 5 on page 22.



The Plan covers:

- ☀ Where the new housing Seaford needs to provide will go (therefore this is not decided by outside developers). All sites identified for housing development are on brownfield sites.
- ☀ Key green spaces to be given added protection.
- ☀ Parts of the town which are to be conserved.
- ☀ Suitable design requirements for new housing in the town.

The Plan enables Seaford Town Council to receive 25% in Community Infrastructure Levy monies which may be used to support a number of extra projects in the Town.

Signage

Twelve new signs were installed around Seaford to direct tourists to the town's array of attractions.

The signs were a short term project of Impact Seaford, jointly funded and designed by Lewes District Council and Seaford Town Council.

Tourism Development

A range of successful initiatives to support tourism in Seaford have been implemented including publicity brochures in Brighton and Hove hotels and filming in Seaford by TV production companies. A proportion of beach huts have been sold whilst other huts have been made available for private hire and as concessions for small business traders. An overwhelming majority (85%) of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey agreed that tourism is vital to the local economy to ensure local businesses remain viable.



Re-imagining Lewes District
Lewes District Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 is committed to delivering services for its residents. In addition to residents being Lewes District's priority, there is a commitment to sustainability and climate change, affordable housing and building community wealth. The focus over the next four years, which has informed Impact Seaford, is to:

- ☀ Provide Leadership to the district for tackling climate emergency.
- ☀ Creating sustainable community wealth.
- ☀ Building homes that people can afford to live in.

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Economic Prospectus for the South East Coast builds on the government's work and House of Lords' inquiry on the Future of Seaside Towns in 2018. The prospectus has identified a number of proposals to improve economic performance, which include proposals for 'place', most notably to create conditions where public realm is encouraged, particularly where planning will not provide this, and 'business' encouraging investment to incentivise and grow coastal businesses. These emerging proposals have informed the work of Impact Seaford, our Vision and many of the projects identified.

The Projects

With these wider strategic priorities in mind, as well as the Seaford Vision, Impact Seaford is working towards three key aims:

1. Enhancement of the seafront as a key Seaford asset.
2. Encouraging residents and visitors to patronise local businesses.
3. Strengthening routes to employment and civic engagement for the community.

These core priorities form the basis for developing and delivering projects within this Economic Action Plan across the short, medium and longer term.

All projects included in this Economic Action Plan have been assessed using SMART criteria to ensure that they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited. Each of the projects had specific, achievable and measurable actions attributed to them.

Partnership working is at the centre of this Action Plan. Whilst the nature of each project determines the precise role of each partner, the projects are joint projects. The projects described opposite give the names of the lead partners involved rather than the names of all the Partners.

The Short Term

Impact Seaford's short term projects from 2021 – 2024 are as follows:

	Project	Lead Partner(s)	Project Details	Due Date
1	Gateway and Signage	<i>Seaford Chamber of Commerce & Seaford Community Partnership</i>	Gateway/Pavement Signage Project – cost-efficient directional signage to guide visitors between the seafront and town centre. Temporary signs introduced using Welcome Back funding to assist COVID-19 recovery of businesses.	Summer 2021
2	Tourism Development	<i>Seaford Town Council</i>	Promoting an annual programme of events to showcase Seaford to a wider audience.	October 2021
3	Keep it Local Campaign	<i>Seaford Youth Forum & Lewes District Council</i>	Loyalty scheme to incentivise the patronage of local shops. Online signposting to local businesses. Includes sub-brands Eat Local, Shops Local and Make Local.	April 2022

Entrants from the Best Dressed Window 2020 competition brightened Christmas. Despite COVID-19 restrictions curtailing certain planned events, traders continue to do their utmost.



The Medium Term

The projects included for the medium-term are those that will primarily be completed between 2021 and 2025, although this does not preclude commencement on larger projects in the short-term.

	Project	Lead Partner	Project Details	Due Date
1	Salts Improvement Plan	Seaford Town Council	Continuation of improvement initiatives in accordance with masterplan: click for link .	April 2024
2	Cliff Beach Garden and Walk	Seaford Community Partnership	Creation of a garden to enhance the seafront near Splash Point, improve biodiversity and increase climate change awareness.	April 2024
3	Martello Tower	Seaford Town Council	Improved visitor facilities.	April 2025
4	Seafront Development Masterplan:	Seaford Town Council	Strategy for sustainable development of seafront.	April 2025
5	Encouraging More Cycling and Walking	ESCC	Extension of existing cycle paths in line with ESCC's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Related climate change projects to encourage walking and cycling will be integrated to help support the town centre.	October 2025

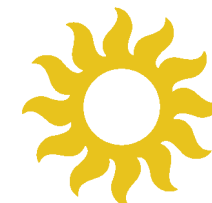
Each of these medium-term projects will have specific, achievable and measurable actions attributed to them.

The Long Term

Longer-term projects are those which are aspirational and contribute to the development of the Seaford Vision to 2030. They are likely to come forward as and when funding is available and secured.

	Project	Lead Partner	Project Details	Due Date
1	Crouch Redevelopment	Seaford Town Council	Variety of works to enhance the existing recreation space.	June 2025
2	South Hill Barn	Seaford Town Council	Work to enable appropriate community use of building.	June 2025
3	Seaford Innovation & Enterprise Hub	Lewes District Council	Development of small business/incubator space in Seaford (no site currently identified).	April 2028
4	Tourist Information Centre Enhancement	Lewes District Council & Seaford Town Council	Improve awareness/visibility of TIC.	April 2030

Each of these longer-term ambitions is subject to resources and the timescales are included for guidance purposes only. Nonetheless, all of these will have specific, achievable and measurable actions attributed to them.



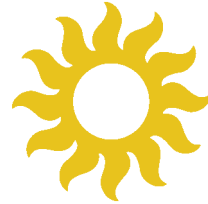
Costs and Available Resources

Impact Seaford recognises that resources are limited and that partners must use best endeavours to manage available funding to deliver on our ambitious vision.

Seaford Town Council has, with the assistance of Impact Seaford, already utilised Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy monies for some of the projects achieved and identified above. Securing funding and the achievement of projects to date highlights the benefits of partnership working.

A National Lottery Climate Action Fund Development Grant has been agreed. These projects will also assist with economic regeneration of the town by encouraging tourism.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, funding has been made available by Central Government, including the Welcome Back Fund. Impact Seaford will explore the availability of these resources to deliver the projects included in this plan.



Short-Term Projects (to April 2024):

1 Gateway/Pavement Signage Project

– the introduction of cost-efficient directional signage to guide visitors between the seafront and town centre, being led by the Seaford Community Partnership with support from the Seaford Chamber of Commerce.

Total Funding Required (£)	Source of Funding	Amount of Funding Secured £	% of Funding Secured
£4,000	Welcome Back Fund	£4,000	100%

Target Completion Date: Summer 2021



2 Tourism Development – Promoting an annual programme of events to showcase Seaford to a wider audience.

Total Funding Required (£)	Source of Funding	Amount of Funding Secured £	% of Funding Secured
£2,000	Seaford Town Council	£2,000	100%

Target Completion Date: October 2021



3 Keep it Local Campaign – Loyalty scheme to incentivise the patronage of local shops. Online signposting to local businesses. Includes sub-brands Eat Local, Shop Local and Make Local.

Total Funding Required (£)	Source of Funding	Amount of Funding Secured £	% of Funding Secured
£1,500	Lewes District Council	£1,500	100%

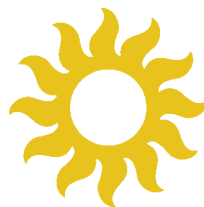
Target Completion Date: April 2022

As part of the COVID-19 community and economic response, Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils created a number of web directories to promote local businesses and support our communities during lockdown. The relative success of these websites means that they are being retained on an ongoing basis.

Addressing Climate Change

The aim across Lewes District Council is to:

- ☀️ Protect and regenerate habitats and green spaces
- ☀️ Use sustainable energy and transport
- ☀️ Build community skills and resilience.



Lewes District Council's Corporate Plan gives a high priority to addressing climate change and various initiatives are being progressed. The Project's Vision is "an **engaged, knowledgeable Community**", where residents and decision-makers **understand the threats** posed by the climate and ecological emergency and are **actively collaborating to reduce their carbon footprint and build personal and ecological resilience**.

Seaford Community Partnership has succeeded in obtaining a Development Grant from the Lottery's Climate Action Fund with a view to submitting a full substantial Bid in 2022.

Additional projects are being developed in Seaford that will augment this Impact Seaford Action Plan, for example to:

1. Enhance the biodiversity, and encourage tourism by enlarging the present Ouse Valley Nature Reserve to include Tide Mills,
2. Enhance Local Green Spaces by creating for each Space a "Friends" group
3. Help Trees for Seaford Green the streets by planting and maintaining more trees, creating green corridors, and wildflower verges.

More information available here

Funding

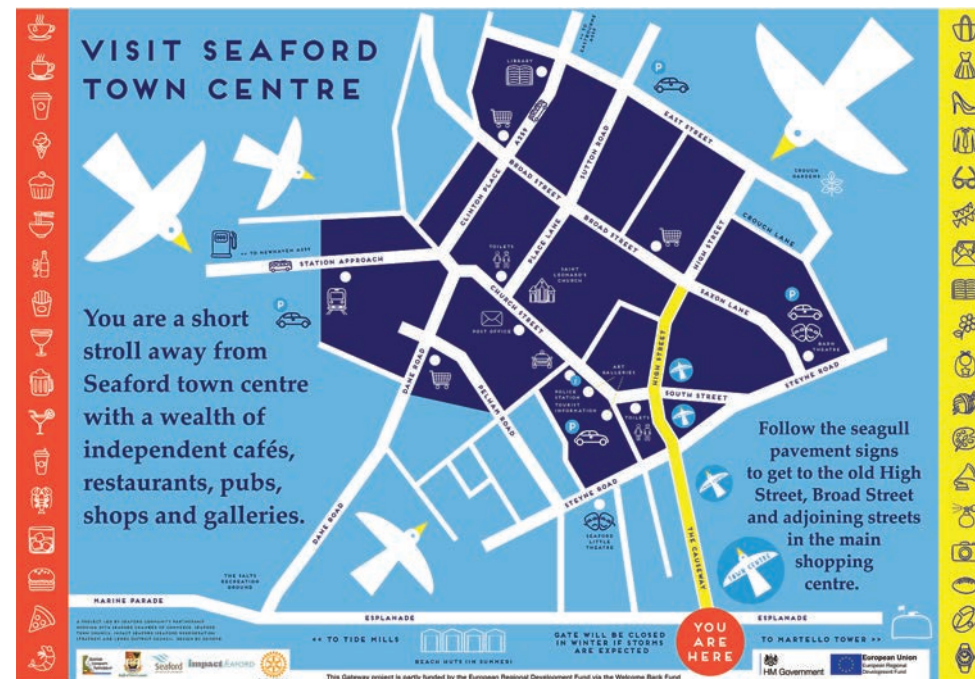
A fundamental principle of Impact Seaford is ensuring that the community is at the heart of the decision-making process, so that projects taken forward reflect the needs, demands and aspirations of local residents and businesses. This has been reflected in some of Impact Seaford's achievements to date.

To deliver on the Seaford Vision, Impact Seaford and its key partners will look to be innovative in accessing appropriate finance. The funding landscape is constantly evolving, with new initiatives and eligibility criteria emerging on a practically daily basis.

Accordingly, at this stage, Impact Seaford will look to develop medium and longer-term concepts to create 'oven-ready' projects. This will facilitate submissions to central funds as and when they become available.

Building Community Wealth

Impact Seaford provides an opportunity for local people to contribute and shape Seaford's economic viability by actively participating in community initiatives which enhance the environment and assets as well as encourage jobs and improve the prosperity of the town.



Joint Working

Impact Seaford is a vehicle for joint working, shaped and informed through the work of local and strategic stakeholders and policymakers. The Board seeks to progress realistic and achievable projects in accordance with relevant strategic guidance and through consultations with local residents and businesses. Examples of this 'bottom up' approach include:

- ☀ Seaford Neighbourhood Plan (2020)
- ☀ STC Salts Development Plan (2014)
- ☀ LDC / SDNPA Joint Core Strategy (2016)
- ☀ LDC Corporate Plan (2020-2024)
- ☀ ESCC Economic Development Strategy (2012)
- ☀ ESCC Local Transport Plan (2011-2026)
- ☀ ESCC Cultural Strategy (2013-2023)
- ☀ Team East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan (2020)
- ☀ South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (2020-2025)
- ☀ SELEP Strategic Economic Plan (2014-2021).

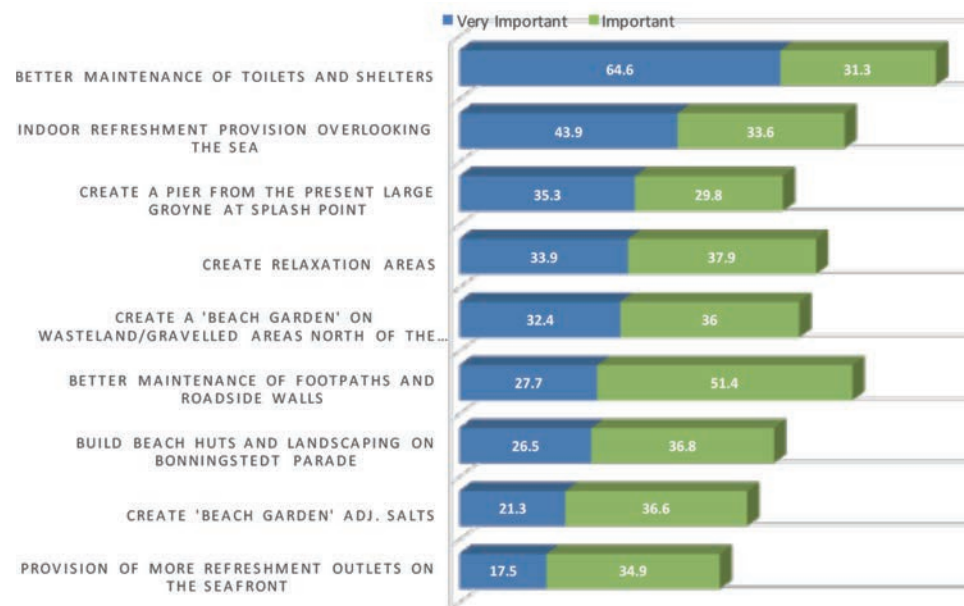
Consultations

Consultations have been – and will remain – a vital part of the Impact Seaford process. In addition to proposed partnerships, public consultations will focus on raising awareness and enhancing existing engagement with the local community to ensure that the public is at the heart of the process.

The Seaford Community Partnership has undertaken extensive consultations with residents and visitors to identify the public perspective on Seaford's seafront, with more than 300 responses. These consultations identified a number of opportunities and challenges, but largely confirmed the Community Partnership's own Vision for the seafront. This seeks a smarter and greener seafront and beach with well-designed and maintained facilities which enhance the natural beauty of the Bay and Seaford Head. Indeed, many respondents were keen to retain the seafront's unspoilt nature.

Nonetheless, visitors did identify some areas where it was felt that the seafront could be enhanced. As shown, almost all respondents wanted to see better maintenance of toilets and shelters, whilst more than ¾ wanted to see new provision for indoor refreshments.

What improvements would you like to see to Seaford seafront?



Source: Seaford Community Partnership

Seaford Town Council has also consulted residents in order to devise a development plan for the Salts Recreation Ground: [click for link](#).

Further consultation will take place as priority projects progress. The local community will be kept informed through the work of key partners to ensure that Impact Seaford continues to be recognised as an important part of delivering the Seaford Vision.



Seaford Neighbourhood Plan

After nearly four years work by many volunteers and much public consultation, 89% of those voting in a Referendum in February 2020 supported the Plan.

At the beginning of the exercise, all households were asked, in a survey, what was important, or very important for the plan to cover. 84.5% stated that the plan should support tourism to ensure local businesses remain viable. In contrast, only 65.3% considered the provision of a balanced stock of housing types to meet local need. High scores were also given to protecting biodiversity, open green spaces and the heritage and character of the town.

Summary of Policies

The full Seaford Neighbourhood Plan is an important mechanism which, as well as identifying sites for housing development, lays out policies which conserve and enhance the Town. The Plan contains policies which cover, amongst other things:

- ☀ the landscape setting and key views
- ☀ heritage assets
- ☀ biodiversity
- ☀ design (In addition to new policies, a new Design Guide has been introduced.)
- ☀ conservation areas including Bishopstone conservation area
- ☀ areas of established character
- ☀ the seafront
- ☀ recreational facilities
- ☀ visitor accommodation

Local Green Spaces

The Neighbourhood Planning process introduces a new concept of Local Green spaces which protect from development, those green areas of particular importance to local residents. The following nine Local Green Spaces are designated in the Plan:

- ☀ Bishopstone Village Green
- ☀ Blatchington Pond
- ☀ Foster Close Open Space
- ☀ Normansal Park/Chalvington Fields not in the National Park
- ☀ Princess Drive Green and old Grand Avenue Bridleway
- ☀ The Crouch
- ☀ The Old Brickfield and Site Adjacent to 47 Surrey Road
- ☀ The Ridings, Lexden Road
- ☀ Land North of Alfriston Road (four plots)

Housing proposals

The government requires each local authority to build a certain number of new homes by 2030 on sites that provide sustainable development, within both central and local government policy. Taking the number of homes for which planning permission has already been given into account, Seaford is now (February 2020) required to build a minimum of a further 185 homes. The Plan identifies the following ten Brown Field sites for housing development:

- ☀ Dane Valley project area – 104 dwellings (net addition of 74)
- ☀ Jermyn & Sons, 10 Claremont Road – 20 dwellings
- ☀ 10 Homefield Place – 19 dwellings
- ☀ Brooklyn Hyundai, Claremont Road – 13 dwellings
- ☀ Holmes Lodge, 72 Claremont Road – 12 dwellings
- ☀ Station approach/Dane Road – 12 dwellings above existing retail space
- ☀ Severn Sisters pub, Alfriston Road – 9 dwellings
- ☀ Old House Depository, Claremont Road – 35 dwellings (development already completed)
- ☀ Elm Court, Blatchington Road – 9 dwellings
- ☀ Florence house – 7 dwellings

A total of 210 dwellings are assumed to be necessary to achieve, by 2030, the minimum of 185 dwellings.

Community Aspirations

In addition to the planning policies described above, the plan contains nine Community Aspirations which include recommendations covering: signage, the town centre, better maintenance of the seafront, investigation of the demand for visitor accommodation and drawing up a list of locally listed buildings.



Access the Seaford Neighbourhood Plan



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ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2021

Photo back cover and page 10
courtesy of Nigel French.

