

Southwold Harbour

Outline Business Case 2020-21



Introduction

It's been another successful year at Southwold Harbour. The caravan site has gone from strength to strength, attracting more visitors each year. The team have continued to make improvements to the camping and campervan fields, with more power points and hard standing, and improvements to showers and bathrooms. But they have maintained the special character of the site, with the same simple offer that attracts people to the site year after year.

And at the harbour itself, we've seen the same growth – with more visitors each year arriving by boat, on foot and by car and bicycle. They come to shop, see the unique environment, to eat and use the facilities of the harbour. And managing the demands placed on the harbour by all of these visitors is the job of the harbourmasters and their staff, who have continued to do a great job this year.

Southwold Harbour is a special place and we are fortunate to have it within our district. But we know that it is a location that comes with a considerable responsibility; that we need to understand the forces at work in the river, the estuary and at sea, and to be ready to make the changes and investments needed to maintain this wonderful natural resource for harbour users and visitors for years to come.

And the way that we manage this responsibility has been the subject of much discussion this year. In fact, debate about the best governance arrangements for the harbour have been a source of lively discussion for decades. Now we have agreed a way forwards. Following a thorough and detailed consultation with local people, we are delighted that a decision has been reached that addressed the concerns of various stakeholders while also safeguarding the future of the harbour. Investment in the harbour can now take place with confidence and in the knowledge that local people will play a role in a bright future for the town and the site. A Harbour Management Committee – similar to those that manage other, similar harbours across the country – is a way that local voices can have a seat around the table when decisions are made affecting the Harbour.

This outline business case provides some information on the harbour, and sets some outline priorities for the Harbour Management Company during its first year of operation. It is anticipated that the Harbour Management Committee itself will draft a full 5-10 year business plan as one of its first priorities.

Background Information

Relevant legislation:

- Pier and Harbour Orders (Elgin and Lossiemouth and Southwold) Confirmation Act 1933;
- The Harbours Act 1964;
- The Transport Act 1981;
- The Harbour, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847;
- The Statutory Harbour Undertakings (Accounts etc.) Regulations 1983; and
- Local Government Act 1972.

Report on Statutory Harbour Undertakings

East Suffolk Council is the statutory harbour authority for Southwold Harbour and 'The Corporation' for the purpose of the Pier and Harbour Orders (Elgin and Lossiemouth and Southwold) Confirmation Act 1933 (Hereafter referred to as the 1933 Harbour Order). Harbour legislation requires the Council to prepare an annual statement of accounts relating to harbour activities and any associated activities for each harbour for which it is the statutory harbour authority. This report contains a summary of activities during the year and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 for Southwold Harbour.

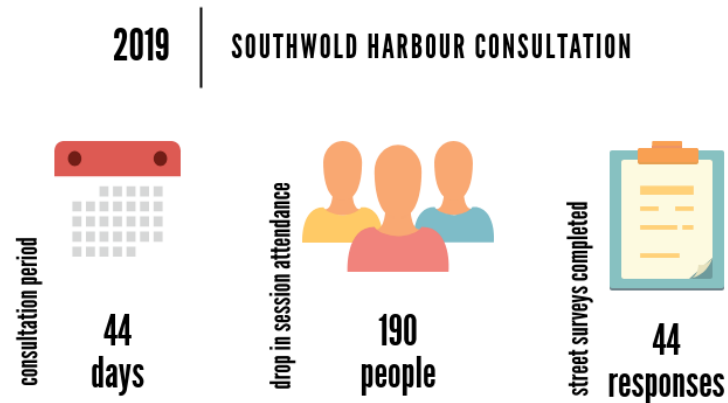
Principal activities:

The principal activities during this year continue to be the provision and maintenance of anchorage, moorings, pontoons and associated harbour facilities as well as the management of leases for harbour land and buildings.

Harbour Management Committee

A thorough and detailed consultation with local people was carried out in relation to the future management of Southwold Harbour Lands. The views of key stakeholders such as the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Inshore Fishing and Conservation Authority (IFCA), Environment Agenda and the Department for Transport were also sought.

The consultation involved face to face meetings, an online survey and a number of public meetings and drop in session. The aim was to gather feedback on people's view on how a Harbour Management Committee could best meet the needs of users of the harbour, and reflect the views of residents and local councillors.



At a meeting held at the end of March 2019, it was agreed that a new strategic body called the Harbour Management Committee will oversee harbour operation, bringing expertise and experience to the management of the port.

It will ensure there is more local involvement and engagement in the management and delivery of harbour operations and safeguard its future. The Committee will consist of a group of Councillors and experts committed to securing long-term investment, while also reinforcing transparency and local involvement.

In December, the Joint Committee agreed that it wishes to revisit resolutions made in March 2015 to create a charitable company to manage the Southwold Harbour Lands as it believes these resolutions were no longer appropriate.

The new 'Harbour Management Committee' for the Southwold Harbour Lands will provide a sustainable model which will:

- Meet all of the 'Key Principles' outlined in the 2014 'Southwold Harbour Lands Consultation' document
- Enable 'local influence' by inclusion of varied stakeholder groups, including Southwold Town Council and East Suffolk Council

- Provide an opportunity to include appropriate skillsets for the effective management of the Southwold Harbour Lands
- Provide an effective management structure to implement the PGGG and consider future governance and legislative options
- Satisfy the economic security and level of control required by East Suffolk Council for future investment



This document sets out some background and an outline of the priorities for the Harbour Management Committee in the financial years 2020-21.

Operational Activity in the Harbour – 2018-19

Southwold Harbour is sited within The Southwold Harbour Lands, as prescribed and delineated by the 1933 Harbour Order.

As Harbour Authority and 'Corporation' for the purpose of the 1933 Harbour Order, East Suffolk Council lets a number of holdings within Southwold Harbour Lands, to various parties.

Revenue from Southwold Harbour is retained for use in its operation, in accordance with and as outlined in sec 39 of the 1933 Harbour Order.

Southwold Harbour is managed by a Harbour Master and Deputy Harbour Master. Harbour users have formed an Association (Southwold Harbour & River Blyth User Association) which has regular meetings with Harbour staff and designated, responsible East Suffolk Council officers, to discuss issues pertaining to Southwold Harbour.

Southwold Harbour attracts a large number of pedestrian visitors as well as pleasure and business vessels, who use its facilities. The port is home to a number of artisanal fishermen; visiting wind farm vessels are increasing, due to developing projects for renewable energy in the area.

In 2018/19 1203 vessels used Southwold Harbour, and staff dealt with over 3,800 contacts by radio.

Of those vessels, nearly 280 were from vessels registered in other countries (predominantly the Netherlands and Belgium). Southwold remains an attractive destination for vessels from these countries.

Health and Safety improvements in the Harbour Undertaking have been ongoing with improvements to fencing, roadways and segregation between pedestrians and vehicles.

Investment has been made in improving the caravan and camping site, with new hard-standing pitches and electric hook up points being installed, along with toilet and shower block improvements. In addition, the reception has been renovated, with new windows and interiors, to improve the environment for staff and visitors.

In 2018, building on a preliminary report of the Coastal Partnership team into the likely engineering work that would be required in the harbour, a detailed technical specification for a full Harbour Survey was drafted. The survey itself – which will form the basis for a 20 year engineering

programme – will be carried out in the summer of 2019. This survey will form the basis of the business plan of the Harbour Management Committee.

In addition to the cyclical maintenance routine observed by harbour staff and Waveney District Council departments, other activities during 2018/19 include:

- Scoping new works for new visitors staging
- Installation of new electricity sub stations and cabling on the caravan site, preparatory to providing power to sites
- Development of training plans, including meeting the requirements of the PMSC, as well as fire, manual handling and general H&S awareness
- Securing funding for repairs to the North Training Arm fendering, with work to repair being scheduled for 2019
- Improvements in the fencing on the South side of the river (Walberswick side) to provide better protection for dogs and dog walkers from accessing the river.
- Ongoing discussions with the offshore energy industry about the potential role of the harbour in supporting windfarm operations

Harbour Management Committee – An outline of Year 1 priorities

The HMC is intended to be the body responsible for taking day to day decisions around the operation of the harbour, to manage the harbour safely and in line with relevant legislation and to draft and deliver the objectives set out in the business plan.

As this is the first year of operation for the HMC, a multi-year business plan has not been drafted as this is a responsibility for the HMC itself. The Harbour Management Committee is the body that will set the priorities for the Harbour Operation. However, as there need to be some priorities set for the period before the HMC is operational, what follows is a short description of the priorities for the organisation during the financial years 2020-2021.

Business Plan Action	Comments
To oversee the delivery of the Southwold Harbour Survey from external consultants	This specialist survey will provide empirical data on which to base a maintenance and investment plan. It is anticipated that the business plan will be based on the financing requirements suggested by this plan
To draft the budget for the HMC - which will be a fairly modest one for day to day matters; and To consider recommendations to ESC for capital requirements – including potential borrowing, based on the relevant studies and data.	The budget should include revenue projections, capital requirements as set out in the Harbour Survey, and if necessary any borrowing requirement
To draft a five-year business plan for the Harbour Management Committee	
To receive the Caravan Site Investment report and draft an action plan	
To prepare a budget based on this report, to include any investment requirements.	Budget to cover revenue projections and any capital borrowing requirements.

To arrange induction and training of Harbour Management Committee members, including an ongoing skills audit and training needs analysis	
To prepare for an application for a Harbour Revision Order to update the governing legislation for the harbour lands, including the safeguards recommended by the Southwold Harbour Lands Joint Committee in March 2019 in respect of income, sale and constitutional matters.	