

HERITAGE COASTS REVIEW 2022



An assessment of the current status and activity in England's Heritage Coasts and a forward look with future-proofing recommendations

Executive Summary

1. Introduction to the Review

England's 32 Heritage Coasts were defined between 1973 and 2001 as stretches of our finest coastline. They are recognised for their exceptionally fine scenic quality, their undeveloped character and for the special significance of the environment and cultural features they contain. The objectives of Heritage Coasts include the conservation of their natural beauty and heritage, the enhanced of public enjoyment and understanding, the improvement of the health of inshore waters and supporting the needs of their businesses and communities.

It is sixteen years since the last review of Heritage Coasts in England. National funding for Heritage Coasts came to an end in 2005 and activities since

then have been maintained from local authority budgets supported by external project funding. Over this period, much has changed in the coastal environment, with new policy priorities for nature, communities and natural processes, not to mention the growing urgency of climate change.

As an island nation, our coastline continues to loom large in the public consciousness. There is renewed interest in its abundant nature and its role in our health and leisure, as well as in our trade and national security. This review provides a timely stocktake of the state of England's finest coastal landscapes, as defined by its Heritage Coasts.

2. The extent and character of Heritage Coasts

Location and area: Heritage Coasts occupy about a fifth of England's coastline. They have defined landward boundaries which are typically 2km from the coast (but in places are as narrow as 100m or as wide as 7km). They are unique as a spatial definition in straddling the terrestrial–marine boundary and extending below Mean Low Water, although their seaward boundary is not defined.

Co-location with the designated landscapes: The large majority of Heritage Coasts lie within designated landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONBs - and National Parks). Only Durham, Flamborough Headland, Spurn, Lundy and St Bees Head lie entirely outside a designated landscape. Heritage Coasts make up all or a large proportion of five AONBs (the Isles of Scilly, Northumberland Coast, North Devon Coast, Cornwall and South Devon AONBs) and cover all of the coastline of two National Parks (Exmoor and the North York Moors) and the large majority of the South Downs'. However, significant parts of some of these Heritage Coasts lie outside the designated landscapes they are associated with, creating anomalous boundaries.

Substantially undeveloped but close to large populations: Only 2% of Heritage Coasts are built-up, and Heritage Coasts represent a high proportion of England's undeveloped coast. However, some Heritage Coasts have large populations on their doorstep (e.g. Durham, North Yorkshire and Cleveland, Purbeck, West Dorset and South Devon). Nationally, a fifth of England's population live within an hour's drive of a Heritage Coast, making them highly accessible for recreation and enjoyment. In relative terms, many Heritage Coasts are both less developed but more accessible to people than many of the designated landscapes.

Patterns of land use: A feature of most Heritage Coasts' landscape is the narrow coastal strip (often around 500m wide) which consists of biodiverse habitats such as cliff and foreshore, salt marsh, mudflats, coastal heathland and unimproved pasture. A high proportion of their 'features of special significance and interest' and recreational activity are in this strip and it is likely to coincide with the statutorily defined coastal margin being created as part of the England Coast Path. Inland of this strip, land use tends to be dominated by productive farmland (arable or improved pasture) typical to the region.

3. The status and relevance of Heritage Coasts to national policy

Definition: Heritage Coasts are not a statutory landscape designation like AONBs and National Parks but are instead defined through voluntary agreement between Government and local authorities, subject to national criteria and objectives.

Origins: During the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Heritage Coasts were a key part of England's place-based environmental policy, with a significant national funding programme supporting activities by local authorities to deliver the four national objectives of Heritage Coasts.

Since 2000: The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which enhanced the status of AONBs, and the ending of the Countryside Agency's national funding of Heritage Coasts in 2005, effectively diminished their status. These factors have (inadvertently) placed them in a second league of protected landscapes.

Local authority interest: There continues to be interest from local authorities in the Heritage Coast definition, including in the extension of an existing Heritage Coast (St Bees Head) and the creation of a new one (on the Lincolnshire Coast). Local authorities see the definition as providing an important 'place making' cache which recognises their environmental quality as places to live, work and visit, and as an opportunity to give greater planning protection in the face of high development pressure.

Environmental significance: Heritage Coasts are rich in designated sites, with over a quarter of their area designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a high concentration of Scheduled Monuments and high levels of ownership and management by environmental bodies, particularly the National Trust. Heritage Coasts' marine extent means that their seascape character is just as important to their scenic value as their landscape character. However, the newness of Seascape Character Assessment as a discipline means that few of the Heritage Coasts have had their distinctive seascapes described.

Policy relevance: Over the 16 years since the last review, England's coastline and coastal communities have received renewed attention in national policy and there has been increasing partnership working by organisations at the coast. Furthermore, the national objectives of Heritage Coasts remain as relevant to current national policy priorities, especially those at the coastal interface, as they did when they were developed.

Low profile in national policy: However, with very few exceptions, the recent national reviews and statements of England's landscape and environmental policy make no reference to the Heritage Coast definition or objectives. Most Heritage Coasts are invisible in national programmes related to these policies. The complete absence of Heritage Coasts from the Landscapes Review (2019) and Government's response to this (2022) is the most obvious example of this. The lack of a national 'champion' for Heritage Coasts, in comparison to AONBs and National Parks is likely to be one reason for this.

Social challenges: Communities in and close to Heritage Coasts face significant social and economic issues, including high levels of multiple deprivation (e.g. Durham, North Northumberland and North Yorkshire & Cleveland) and a lack of affordable housing for local workers (e.g. South Devon, Cornwall Heritage Coasts and the Isles of Scilly).

Stakeholders are aware of the relevance of the definition (through its fourth national objective) to these issues and, especially, its potential to promote a high-quality place-based identity that stimulates sustainable economic development and recognises the needs of the sectors that sustain this identity. The poor health outcomes present in many coastal communities and the opportunities to enhance these through environmental investment and action was highlighted by many stakeholders. However, practical use of the Heritage Coast definition to achieve these goals is currently limited.

4. Strategic approaches and planning in Heritage Coasts

Strategic partnerships and management plans:

Unlike the designated landscapes, formal partnerships involving a range of stakeholders were not a core feature of most Heritage Coasts when they were defined. Heritage Coasts originally developed their own Management Plans, but most have not maintained one since the early 2000s. The Durham, Sussex and Lundy Heritage Coasts are exceptions on both counts, currently having Heritage Coast Partnerships and a dedicated Management Plan (although the status of those in Sussex is under review).

Reliance on designated landscapes plans: The overwhelming majority of Heritage Coasts, being in designated landscapes, are in principle covered by the remit of their AONB or National Park statutory management plan. However, in practice there is usually little evidence of these addressing the Heritage Coast to any significant extent, with the consequences that:

- Heritage Coasts' inshore marine areas are usually not covered;
- The importance and needs of "the features of special significance and interest" for which Heritage Coasts were defined may be overlooked;
- They usually do not have the benefit of an agreed strategy for engaging with stakeholders and attracting external funding to deliver Heritage Coast objectives; and
- The terrestrial areas of those Heritage Coasts that are associated with designated landscapes but actually lie outside their boundaries are effectively 'orphaned'.

Protection in land use planning: Heritage Coasts are recognised by paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which enhances previous Government planning guidance and protection. All Local Plans covering Heritage Coasts contain policies reflecting its requirements. A key element of NPPF paragraph 178 is the importance given to the 'special character' of Heritage Coasts but these are often either poorly defined or their description is difficult to locate. In practice, for the

large majority of Heritage Coasts that lie within designated landscapes, NPPF paragraphs 176 and 177 take precedence.

Protection in marine and national infrastructure planning:

The status of Heritage Coasts is somewhat ambiguous in the Marine Policy Statement that govern the licensing of marine activities, and they gain no formal protection in the National Policy Statements that govern national infrastructure planning. However, in both there are case examples where the presence and special character of Heritage Coasts have been taken into account and given a level of protection.

Brand recognition and place-making: Tourism businesses at the coast continue to use the term 'Heritage Coast' to promote their area. Contributors to the study felt that the public may understand it better than the two statutory landscape designations, perhaps because the term is succinct and its meaning is clear.

The place-making role of the Heritage Coast brand is a factor in the interest by some local authorities to extend or define new Heritage Coasts. However, contributors to this study highlighted the risks of confusion and dilution that arise from overlapping place-branding. They emphasised the benefits of more local identities, including those of the individually named designated landscapes which are better known than the individual names of Heritage Coasts. The international status of Heritage Coasts as Category V Protected Landscapes/Seascapes (recognised by IUCN) is unclear and risks being lost.

National guidance and liaison: There has been no national guidance on Heritage Coasts since 1992 and the definition has a relatively low profile within Natural England, its sponsoring body. Unlike the designated landscapes, there is no organisation that champions the definition. Frustration was expressed by some of the people working in Heritage Coasts at the lack of networking and sharing of information between them.

5. Management activities in Heritage Coasts

An emphasis on practical management activities: During the first three decades of the Heritage Coast definition, the focus of activity was on practical environmental and recreational management, involving staff working to manage and enhance the coastline at a grassroots level.

Many contributors to this study felt that the Heritage Coast definition continues to offer great potential for co-ordinated practical management work with landowners, and engagement with local residents, businesses and visitors.

Delivering the Heritage Coast objectives: As noted earlier, all four of the national objectives of the Heritage Coast definition remain highly relevant – indeed even more relevant than during the period of the last review in 2006. There is good evidence of activity to deliver the Heritage Coast objectives in all Heritage Coasts but, with few exceptions, this is not being done as part of specific Heritage Coast programmes. This activity is taking place *in* Heritage Coasts (as areas of particular value and need), rather than *for* Heritage Coasts (as a landscape with a defined national status).

Natural beauty, public enjoyment and health of inshore waters: Delivery of the first Heritage Coast objective (natural beauty and heritage) is regarded as the priority by most stakeholders and there are many examples of beneficial management projects taking place, most of them using time-limited external funding.

6. Future trajectories for Heritage Coasts

The Heritage Coast ‘journey’: The history of the definition can be characterised as one of pioneering advancement (1970s to early 2000s) and latterly – for many but not all Heritage Coasts – one of stagnation as they have lost national funding and recognition in national policy. Looking to the future, there are three possible scenarios:

1. Retain: If there is no deviation from the status quo, the Heritage Coasts that are in decline or are being overshadowed by a designated landscape will continue to become less influential and increasingly irrelevant.

The second objective (public enjoyment and understanding) is also strongly supported, with activities being split between the physical management of recreation and the enhancement of public understanding and appreciation.

Delivery of the third objective (the health of inshore waters) remains the weakest, being largely outside the remit of local authorities and designated landscape bodies.

The economic and social needs of communities: Much of the work to deliver the first two objectives contributes to this fourth objective. Contributors to this review also saw potential for Heritage Coasts’ high scenic qualities and natural capital to be used to promote sustainable and economic growth more widely, particularly in relation to the health and wellbeing and levelling-up agendas and to adaptation to climate change.

Responsibility for the Heritage Coast definition: Since Heritage Coasts are defined through agreement between Natural England and local authorities, responsibility for administering the Heritage Coast definition rests with the local authority. In designated landscapes this means the AONB Units and National Park Authorities. However, there is no formal recognition or requirement in the national funding arrangements for AONBs and National Parks for them to carry out this function.

Where local authority structures change, such as through Unitary Authority Status, there is no process for refreshing the new authority’s commitment.

2. Revive: This would involve a more energised and nationally supported approach to resurrect and reprioritise the national objectives of the definition, through an updated understanding of the special character and needs of Heritage Coasts within the context of their designated landscapes.

3. Re-imagine: With Government proposing to give AONBs and National Parks a new ‘unified mission’, now might be the right time to re-imagine the Heritage Coast definition, focussing on supporting high quality coastal landscapes close to where people live and visit to enhance place-making, and the opportunities for ‘green’ economic development.

7. Overall conclusion on the state of Heritage Coasts in 2022

Heritage Coasts continue to be coastlines of exceptionally fine scenic quality, rich in nature and cultural heritage, and highly valued as places to live, work and visit.

The objectives of Heritage Coasts, last updated 30 years ago, remain highly relevant to new national policy priorities. This is particularly the case at the terrestrial-marine interface where Heritage Coasts are unique as a spatial definition.

Notwithstanding the continuing relevance of its national objectives, the Heritage Coast definition is no longer referenced in national policy reviews and statements such as the Landscapes Review. An exception to this is the planning protection provided to Heritage Coasts through paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Activities that deliver most of the national objectives of Heritage Coasts continue to take place, supported by a wide range of partners. But the definition's omission from recent national landscape policy means that these can be ad hoc and lack the benefit of a stated shared ambition, coordinated and channelled through the recognition of the nationally important and valued coast.

There is no current national monitoring of Heritage Coasts, leading to the risk that actions may be less joined up and outcomes less effective than they could be.

Planning policy appears to be effective in maintaining their undeveloped nature on

land, but there is ambiguity over their status in marine and national infrastructure planning.

In most areas, the Heritage Coast definition itself is becoming lost and is receiving little dedicated attention within the designated landscapes in which most Heritage Coasts occur. A past strength of Heritage Coasts as a mechanism for engaging in practical environmental and recreational management with business and communities appears to have fallen out of favour, in part due to reduced funding.

Despite these shortcomings, the definition offers significant new capacity, reflecting national policy priorities, as a voluntary place-based status that complements designated landscapes.

Its key potential is in recognising coastal landscapes of high scenic and other environmental value which in turn provide opportunities for sustainable economic development, the growth of social capital within communities, and enhancement of personal health and wellbeing.

Unless there is reconfirmation by Government of the role of the Heritage Coast definition, and new national guidance on how this role can be delivered by local authorities alongside the designated landscapes, it is likely that the Heritage Coast definition will continue to decline, diminishing the valuable opportunities it offers to the nation's stretches of finest coastline.

8. Recommendations to address these findings

The current status of Heritage Coasts

- A. Defra should reaffirm the status of Heritage Coasts in the family of national protected landscapes, including their importance as defined areas of England's finest stretches of undeveloped coast and their distinctive role in delivering national policy priorities in these areas.
- B. There should be liaison between Natural England and local planning authorities, following local authority reorganisation or the creation of designated landscapes, to ensure Heritage Coast agreements and commitments are reaffirmed.
- C. The alignment between the boundaries of Heritage Coasts and designated landscape boundaries should be given a priority in Natural England's designations review, ensuring that designation boundaries encompass all parts of the Heritage Coast they are associated with.
- D. Defra, through Natural England, should consider whether the status of Heritage Coasts as internationally recognised IUCN Category V protected landscapes/ seascapes should be reconfirmed and, if so, should support the relevant local authorities in achieving this.

The role of Heritage Coasts in delivering national policy priorities

- E. The role of Heritage Coasts in the delivery of the national Nature Recovery Network (and for example the 30by30 target) should be clarified, including the ways in which Heritage Coasts should be recognised and supported through Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- F. Priority should be given in Environmental Land Management schemes, particularly the Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes, for projects in Heritage Coasts to protect and enhance their exceptional scenic quality and features of special significance and interest.

Planning protection of Heritage Coasts

- G. In view of the ambiguous references to Heritage Coasts in the Marine Policy Statement (2011) and the National Policy Statements, the status of Heritage Coast as a material consideration in Marine and National Infrastructure Planning should be clarified so that it matches that in the NPPF.

- H. Technical guidance to local authorities should be provided on how and where the 'special character' of Heritage Coasts should be described so that it can be used effectively in planning decisions, including on a non-statutory basis in NSIPs through Natural England's advice.

The Delivery of Heritage Coast objectives

- I. Guidance should be prepared for designated landscape bodies on how Heritage Coast should be recognised, and their objectives included in their statutory Management Plans, and in the preparation of specific Heritage Coast documentation where appropriate.
- J. Guidance should be provided to local authorities and designated landscape bodies on how they can use their influence to support Heritage Coast objectives outside their LA / landscape designation boundaries - including and particularly offshore.
- K. Guidance to national agencies, statutory partnerships (e.g. Regional Flood and Coastal Authorities) and utility companies should be provided on how they can support the delivery, with local authorities, of Heritage Coast objectives. This is particularly relevant to the third objective (health of inshore waters), which relies on their involvement.
- L. Consideration should be given to how any new national funding that becomes available to local authorities, AONB teams and National Parks can be directed to 'on-the-ground' delivery of Heritage Coast objectives, recognising their broad environmental, economic, social and health benefits and their high value and profile with local communities and visitors.
- M. Progress towards achieving Heritage Coast objectives should be included in existing national monitoring frameworks, for instance as spatial subsets of the indicators in the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes and the People and Nature Survey.
- N. Natural England should consider how a regular programme of networking amongst organisations and lead staff working in Heritage Coasts could be developed.

Note: The Heritage Coast review was commissioned to provide Natural England with evidence and analysis. These independent recommendations are not agreed actions.

HERITAGE COASTS REVIEW 2022

Full Review Report and Appendices



An assessment of the current status and activity in England's Heritage Coasts and a forward look with future-proofing recommendations, commissioned by Natural England from Rural Focus Ltd.

July 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. England's 32 Heritage Coasts were defined between 1973 and 2001 as stretches of our finest coastline. They are recognised for their exceptionally fine scenic quality, their undeveloped character and for the special significance of the environment and cultural features they contain. The objectives of Heritage Coasts include the conservation of their natural beauty and heritage, the enhanced of public enjoyment and understanding, the improvement of the health of inshore waters and supporting the needs of their businesses and communities.
- 1.2. It is sixteen years since the last review of Heritage Coasts in England took place¹. Much has changed in the coastal environment, with new policy priorities for nature, communities and natural processes and the growing urgency of climate change. National funding for Heritage Coasts came to an end in 2005 and activities since then have been maintained from local authority budgets supported by external project funding.
- 1.3. As an island nation, our coastline continues to loom large in the public consciousness. There is renewed interest in its nature and natural resources and its role in our health and recreation, as well as in our trade and national security. This review provides a timely stocktake of the state of England's finest coastlines, as defined by the Heritage Coasts.

Purpose of this review

- 1.4. The aim of this study was to carry out research and collate evidence on the delivery of the Heritage Coast objectives since and with reference to a previous study in 2006; to identify changes in policy and environmental context and the influence this has had on Heritage Coasts; to develop an overview of the level of success and the value of the Heritage Coast definition; and to take a forward-look covering the next fifteen years and provide 'future proofing' recommendations.

Methodology

- 1.5. The work was undertaken between January and May 2022 by Robert Deane and Richard Clarke of Rural Focus Ltd. Evidence to address a framework of research topics (Appendix I) was gathered from each of the Heritage Coasts through interviews, reviews of documents and analysis of spatial data. Two online surveys were undertaken (Appendix IX): one for the leading member of staff responsible in each Heritage Coast and one for wider stakeholders. A series of online workshops were held during February attended by 30 people working in Heritage Coasts at a local, regional and national level (Appendix II). A further 'summative' workshop, to consider this report's findings and recommendations was held in May.

In this report, boxes in this style are used to show comments from participants in the review, made in survey responses, workshops or interviews.

Acknowledgements

- 1.6. Nearly 100 people who have interests and experience of living or working in England's Heritage Coasts contributed to the review, providing invaluable insights. The contract manager at Natural England was Sarah Manning and her support and guidance played a critical part in the Review which the authors gratefully acknowledge.

Structure of the report

- 1.7. The Review is split into seven chapters. Chapter 2 sets out the background and context to the Heritage Coast definition and Chapter 3 describes the current extent and character of Heritage Coasts. Chapters 4 and 5 consider, in turn, the strategic planning and the management activities taking place in them. Chapter 6 reflects on how the Heritage Coast definition is evolving and Chapter 7 draws overall conclusions from the review and presents a set of 14 recommendations for further consideration.

The findings of the Review are summarised at key points on pages 8, 22, 37, 48 and 52.

¹ LUC (2006). Review and Evaluation of Heritage Coasts in England. Report to the Countryside Agency. July 2002. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4594438590431232>. An earlier review took place in 1982: Cullen, P (1982). Evaluation of the Heritage Coast Programme in England and Wales. Canberra College of Advanced Education. Report to the Countryside Commission.

2. Background

- 2.1. This Chapter provides the context to the study, covering the national objectives of the Heritage Coast definition, the origins and process of definition and the current situation with possible extensions and new Heritage Coasts. It finishes with a short review of the key policy issues facing England's coasts.

Objectives of the Heritage Coast definition

- 2.2. The original objectives of Heritage Coasts, which were established by the Countryside Commission in 1970, were redefined and broadened by the Countryside Agency in 1992, as set out in **Table 1**, and remain the national objectives that apply to defined Heritage Coasts in England.

Table 1. The national purposes of the Heritage Coast definition

1. To conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral and marine flora and fauna, and their heritage features of architectural, historical and archaeological interest
2. To facilitate and enhance their enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with, the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features
3. To maintain, and improve (where necessary) the environmental health of inshore waters affecting Heritage Coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures
4. To take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of the economic and social needs of the small communities on these coasts, by promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features

- 2.3. During the period of national funding to 2005, these objectives underpinned the agreements between the Countryside Commission / Countryside Agency and the coastal local authorities, shaping the programmes of work that took place. Since that funding ceased they have continued to guide, in a less formal way, how local authorities have interpreted the definition, and they have been used by Natural England at national and regional level to influence policy towards the protection and management of Heritage Coasts. However, because Heritage Coasts are not a statutory designation in the same way as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks (hereafter referred to as the designated landscapes), these objectives have no statutory status. This means that bodies such as the Environment Agency, Crown Estate, Marine Management Organisation and utility companies are not obliged to take account of them. The implications of this are considered in Chapter 6.

Origins and development of Heritage Coasts

- 2.4. The first work to define Heritage Coasts took place during and just after World War II, with a Government-commissioned report identifying the stretches of coast in England and Wales considered to be of greatest scenic quality². However, it wasn't until 1970, following a decade of concern about the impact of urban development, that the definition of Heritage Coast status was formally proposed. The Countryside Commission proposed suitable lengths of coast and called for a new statutory designation and purposes. The Government accepted the need to recognise them but rejected the statutory designation route, leaving the adoption and management of Heritage Coast to the coastal local authorities in consultation with the Countryside Commission who determined their boundaries according

² The history of Heritage Coasts is covered in more detail in the previous review (LUC 2006). See Footnote 1 on the previous page.

to national criteria (**Table 2**). This has remained the case since then. It means that Heritage Coasts are referred as being ‘defined’ rather ‘designated’.

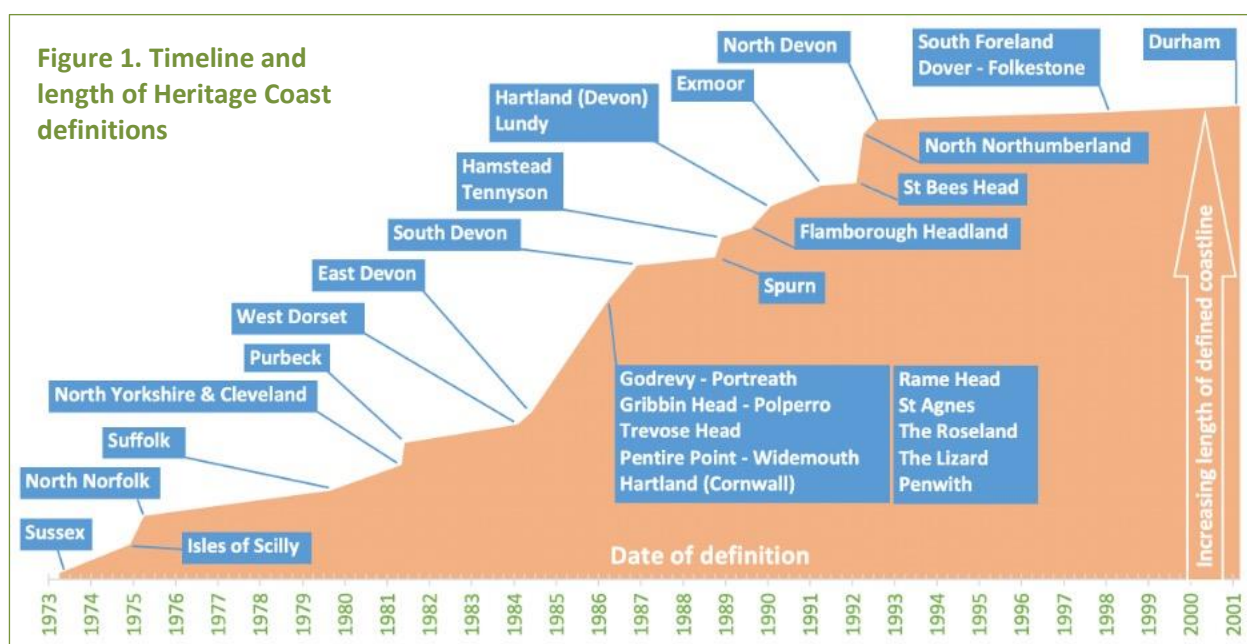
Table 2. The national criteria used to define Heritage Coasts

The Countryside Commission's 1970 Coastal Heritage Report established four main criteria which have remained in place since. These are that Heritage Coasts should be:

- coastline of exceptionally fine scenic quality;
- exceeding one mile in length;
- which is substantially undeveloped; and
- which contains features of special significance and interest, whether natural or man-made.

2.5. The Countryside Commission funded three pilots in the Suffolk, Purbeck and Glamorgan Heritage Coasts from 1974 to 1977. This generated significant interest from other local authorities and by 1980, 19 stretches of Heritage Coast had been defined, with a further 5 in the 1980s, 7 in the 1990s and 1 in 2001.

Figure 1 shows the timeline of Heritage Coasts definition and the increase in length of coastline from 1973 to 2001, since when around a fifth of England’s coastline has been defined as Heritage Coast. In Wales, a similar programme of definition took place between 1973 and 1984, leading to 14 Heritage Coasts occupying a third of the Welsh coastline.



2.6. As part of the agreement with local authorities, the Countryside Commission provided them with funding to prepare and deliver a Heritage Coast Management Plan, including the employment of a Heritage Coast Officer, usually to a rate of 50% of costs. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Countryside Commission’s Heritage Coast programme was a significant one, with funding far exceeding that to AONBs.

2.7. An important change in national policy towards England’s finest landscapes took place with the publication of a report by the Countryside Commission in 1998 ‘Protecting Our Finest Countryside: Advice to Government (CCP 532) which led to measures in The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. These enhanced the status of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, putting them on a par with National Parks in terms of the preparation of a statutory management plan and requiring all relevant authorities to have a duty of regard towards the purposes of designation. Heritage Coasts were

absent from CCP 532 and the CRoW Act, their defined status effectively putting them in a second league behind the designated landscapes.

- 2.8. The Countryside Agency, which replaced the Countryside Commission in 1999, completed its national funding of Heritage Coasts in 2005 (with Durham Heritage Coast receiving funding for a few more years). Natural England, which succeeded the Countryside Agency in 2006, has kept a watching brief on Heritage Coasts, encouraging their local authorities to proactively plan their management and promoting their integration of within AONB and National Park management plans³.

Extensions and further new definitions

- 2.9. Ever since their initial definitions, there have been aspirations to extend many Heritage Coasts. North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast was extended in 1981 and North Northumberland in 1995. The 2006 Review noted interest from some local authorities in other extensions. This included joining up separate parts of the Durham Heritage Coast, a further eastward extension of the North Northumberland Heritage Coast in the Druridge Bay area and a southern extension of the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast to Filey Brigg. The report also recorded interest from local authorities in new Heritage Coasts including, in the late 1990s, parts of Morecombe Bay and in the early 2000s, the part of the Essex coastline between Shoebury Ness and Jaywick. Although none of these came to fruition, they show that local authorities viewed Heritage Coast status as providing benefits. At this time, local authorities sought the definition to confer protection from unwanted coastal housing development (cited as the main reason on the Essex coast) and to enhance the profile of the coast as a high-quality tourism destination. The offer of national funding until 2005 is also likely to have been an attraction.
- 2.10. At the time of this review, there is active consideration of the definition of a new Heritage Coast on the Lincolnshire coast and the northward extension of St Bees Head. **Box 1** summarises the process being followed.
- 2.11. In the absence of any dedicated national funding, it would appear that the motivation for local authorities to seek the definition is twofold. Firstly, Heritage Coasts are seen as providing an important 'place making' cache which recognises their environmental quality as places to live and visit, giving opportunities to enhance recreational experiences and the visitor economy. Secondly, outside designated landscapes, is the opportunity to give greater planning protection in face of high pressure for development.
- 2.12. Its worth noting that Natural England's guidance states that the primary criterion for definition is high scenic quality, meaning that degraded areas cannot be included on the basis that future remediation work will take place following their definition as a Heritage Coast. However, Natural England has previously encouraged such areas to be put forward for definition once remediation has taken place, which has occurred successfully in the North Northumberland and Durham Heritage Coasts.

Box 1. The process for extending or defining Heritage Coasts.

Natural England has updated its guidance on the process for extending or defining a Heritage Coast. This starts with the proponents submitting an assessment report (for which guidance is provided) to Natural England which makes its own assessment.

If the proposed area meets the criteria (Table 2) and a precise boundary can be agreed, Natural England draws up a Heritage Coast Agreement with the relevant local authorities for co-signing with them, and confirms and publicises the definition by making available the GIS boundary data via the MAGIC data portal.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>

Evolving national and local policy objectives at the coast

- 2.13. England's coastline, coastal communities and inshore waters have received much attention in national policy since the last review of Heritage Coasts in 2006. Key drivers of this interest have been, in no particular order, the increased risk of rising sea levels and coastal erosion, the protection of the marine environment, economic and social changes in coastal towns, offshore development of renewable energy and enhancing public access to the coast. Key pieces of national legislation and strategy documents have been:
- The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 which introduced a system of marine planning for the UK's inshore and offshore waters, creating the Marine Management Organisation and establishing Marine Plans; allowed for the statutory designation of Marine Conservation Zones; and introduced a new right of public access to the English Coast which is currently being mapped as a new National Trail, the England Coast Path.
 - The UK Marine Strategy (2012-2015, updated 2019) which established the framework for achieving good environmental status (GES) in our seas, implement a number of EU Directives.
 - The National Flood and Water Management Act 2010 which produced the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England, guiding the work of all risk management authorities (2011, revised 2020).
 - The 25 Year Environment Plan includes a number of goals that affect coastal and marine areas in particular, including securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas, recovering nature, enhancing the beauty of landscapes and connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing.
- 2.14. The Government has put nature recovery front-and-centre of its environmental priorities, and its response to the Landscapes Review (2019), published in January 2022⁴, proposes to give the two designated landscapes, AONBs and National Parks, a new 'unified mission' to drive nature recovery, with a revised statutory purpose that is more specific about the nature outcomes expected from them. Initiatives such as ReMeMaRe, led by the Environment Agency are leading work to deliver nature recovery in coastal habitats⁵.
- 2.15. Action to address climate change is obviously another key focus of Government policy, with recent adaptation action around England's coast including the preparation of Shoreline Management Plans and work in Coastal Change Management Areas.
- 2.16. The social and economic needs of coastal communities have received renewed attention from a variety of authorities including a House of Lords Select Committee⁶ (**Box 2**) and a research report on regeneration in coastal economies⁷. The Government's levelling-up agenda is particularly relevant to many coastal towns that have been undergoing a period of structure economic decline, particularly in the North East

Box 2. The House of Lords Select Committee report *The Future of Seaside Towns* (2019) drew attention to the long-term economic decline and/or low wages in coastal industries such as fishing, shipbuilding and tourism, and to their peripheral location. It called for investment from central government to support sustainable, long-term regeneration. The Government's *Response* (2021) highlighted its action on 'levelling up' and on initiatives such as the creation of Freeports .

⁴ HMG (2022). Landscapes Review (National Parks and AONBs): Government Response. 15 January 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response>

⁵ ReMeMaRe stands for Restoring Meadows, Marsh and Reef. This Environment Agency-led initiative aims to facilitate the coordinated restoration of 15% of England's priority saltmarsh, native oyster reef and seagrass habitats by 2043. <https://ecsa.international/reach/restoring-meadow-marsh-and-reef-rememare>

⁶ The Lords' Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities (2019). *The future of seaside towns*. Report of Session 2017-19 - published 4 April 2019 - HL Paper 320. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldseaside/320/32002.htm>

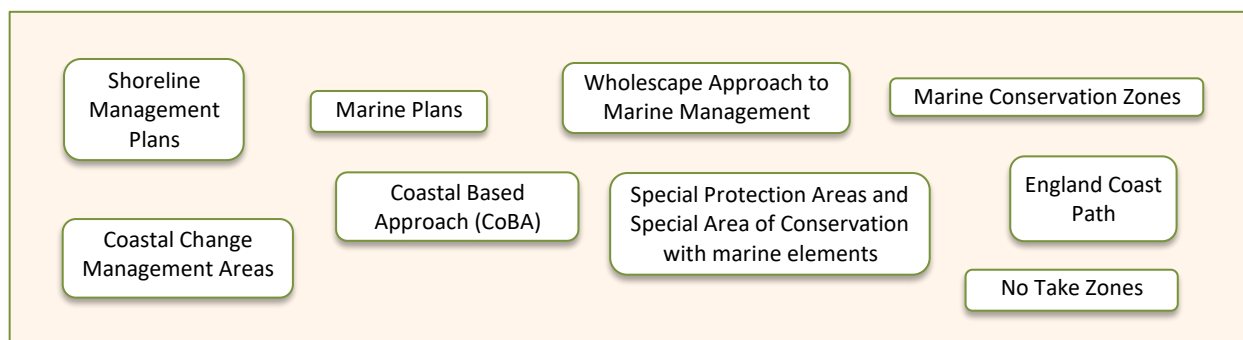
⁷ EG Radius (2020). Turning the Tide – Seaside Regeneration. <https://www.eg.co.uk/resources/turning-the-tide-seaside-regeneration/>

and North West. In other areas, such as the South East and South West, demand for housing is putting significant development pressure on coastal areas. A report from England’s Chief Medical Officer⁸ (Box 3) and work in the North East of England⁹ have highlighted the health inequalities present in many coastal communities.

Box 3. The Chief Medical Officer for England’s Annual Report 2021 examined public health in coastal communities and found that coastal communities have some of the worst health outcomes, highest levels of deprivation and significant deficits in the provision of health services compared to other parts of England. It recommended that there should be a national strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of coastal communities.

- 2.17. There has been significant growth in partnership working by organisations at the coast. The Coastal Communities Alliance was created in 2007 to represent the interests of coastal local authorities and organisations working at the coast, with a particular focus on the socio-economic needs of coastal communities. There is now almost complete coverage of England’s coastline by coastal partnerships addressing management of the marine and estuarine environment, with at least 44 local partnerships bringing together local authorities, environmental NGOs, business organisations and government agencies, supported nationally by the Coastal Partnerships Network. A new initiative in 2020, OneCoast, has brought together a wide range of cross-sectoral voices covering local government, communities, business and the environment to create a unified voice to advocate on behalf of coastal issues, with planning in place for a Year of the Coast in 2023.
- 2.18. **Figure 2** shows examples of the range of policy programmes and initiatives current affecting management of the marine and coastal environment.

Figure 2. Examples of current marine and coastal management initiatives



- 2.19. In view of the high level of activity on coastal issues and the increasing profile of coastal issues in national policy, it is particularly significant that Heritage Coasts are rarely if ever referenced in strategy documents or the work of public bodies at national or regional levels. The quality of the coastal environment and the opportunities it provides for public enjoyment and health is widely acknowledged, but Heritage Coasts are rarely mentioned at all, and if they are it is simply a statement that they exist as defined areas. Without exception, none of the current policy initiatives taking place at the coast seek to use Heritage Coasts as a way of focussing or adding value to their activities.

⁸ Chief Medical Officer for England’s Annual Report 2021: Health in Coastal Communities. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2021-health-in-coastal-communities>

⁹ NECAP (2020). *England’s Physically Inactive Coast: Turning The Tide On Physical Inactivity Rates*. Report by North East Coast Active Partnerships. December 2020. <https://www.activelincolnshire.com/uploads/Englands-Physically-Inactive-Coast.pdf>

2.20. It is clear that the Heritage Coast objectives remain as relevant today as when they were first developed. This is particularly important as there is an acknowledged lack of integration in the terrestrial–marine zone (being addressed through initiatives such as the Wholescape Approach to Marine Management - see para 5.30) and Heritage Coasts are the only defined areas that seek to bridge that gap. The Heritage Coast Objectives speak to a time when they led the way and a more holistic approach was followed. In many ways their simplicity and clarity are more effective in defining the sustainable development goals than many other statements today.

“Heritage Coasts usefully take a broad definition of Nature/Natural Beauty therefore helping to integrate policies within an often sensitive and fragile coastal ‘zone’ which might otherwise fall between terrestrial and marine interventions.”

Heritage Coasts in the family of finest landscapes

- 2.21. During the 1980s and 1990s Heritage Coasts were widely acknowledged as areas of finest countryside, alongside National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, albeit reliant on a voluntary process of definition rather than statutory designation. Indeed, as noted earlier (para. 2.6), their profile and funding was greater than that of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.22. Now, the same low profile of Heritage Coasts described above in relation to coastal policy is evident in relation to their status as areas of high landscape value. The Government’s flagship 25 Year Environment Plan does not mention Heritage Coasts in its Chapter 2 ‘Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’ (nor elsewhere in the document). Heritage Coasts were not covered by The Landscapes Review commissioned by Government¹⁰ (often referred to as The Glover Review), nor in the Government’s response and subsequent consultation.
- 2.23. A critical reason for their absence from the Landscapes Review is likely to have been the lack of a body to champion them (in contrast to National Parks England and the National Association for AONBs).
- 2.24. Natural England’s ongoing landscapes designation programme has not proactively included Heritage Coasts. This has further reinforced the impression that Heritage Coasts are not part of the family of high value landscapes.
- 2.25. With the CROW Act 2000 and the emergence of AONB teams and partnerships, a shift in emphasis with respect to countryside management occurred. AONBs were tasked with taking a strategic approach to the conservation and enhancement of their areas. Invariably the areas covered by the AONB designation were much larger than those of defined as Heritage Coasts. The traditional Countryside Management approach that had been championed and supported by the Countryside Commission for local projects and Heritage Coasts would not work for small AONB Teams covering large areas.
- 2.26. This shift in emphasis from countryside management at the local level towards the adoption of strategic oversight in AONBs further exacerbated the decline of the Heritage Coast approach. On some stretches of coastline this approach can still be seen, but it is the exception rather than the rule. With the loss of Heritage Coast Officers and Rangers, the ability to create a sense of place for Heritage Coasts has diminished.
- 2.27. The National Trust still manage their sites on Heritage Coasts with rangers and project officers, but this is aligned with their overall approach to managing their estate.

“The National Trust Strategy 2020-2055 includes a high degree of overlap with the objectives of Heritage Coast, we also have our Shifting Shore strategy which promotes working with natural processes and adapting to, rather than resisting, coastal change.”

¹⁰ The Landscapes Review (2019). Report to Government. September 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>

2.28. Along with the failure of policy to recognise Heritage Coasts there has also been a lack of data or monitoring of these defined areas. A number of programmes have been put in place to monitor our designated landscapes but they haven't included Heritage Coast. For example, the Monitoring Environment Outcomes in Protected Landscapes programme (MEOPL) has been in place for over a decade now and collects information about the state of the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty but has not included Heritage Coasts.

2.29. It should not be assumed that our coastlines are not being monitored. A huge amount of data is being collected about the coastal interface which is important and valuable at helping address issues such as climate change. It is just that none of this is focused on Heritage Coasts, but that is not to say it could not be in the future.

2.30. The 25 Year Environment Plan may provide opportunities to address monitoring in the Heritage Coasts. One of the two top headlines in chapter 5 of the plan talks about the marine environment "Achieve good environmental status of our seas while allowing marine industries to thrive, and complete our ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas (MPAs)." This aspiration is so closely aligned with the objectives for Heritage Coasts that it provides opportunities to further their management in the future.

"All of the data collected by our monitoring programme is freely available via: www.coastalmonitoring.org under open government license, and we would encourage you to use this/contact us in support of any projects at the coast."

"Within the landscape change monitoring associated with the Defra 25 YEP Outcome Indicator G1 Changes in Landscape and Waterscape Character, there is scope for HCs to be more prominent in monitoring, analysis and evaluation - to inform future management."

Key findings from this chapter

- **Origins:** During the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Heritage Coasts were a key part of England's place-based environmental policy with a significant national funding programme supporting activities by local authorities to deliver the four national objectives of Heritage Coasts.
- **Diminished status:** The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which enhanced the status of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the ending of the Countryside Agency's national funding of Heritage Coasts in 2005, effectively diminished their status, placing them in a second league of protected landscapes which they have continued to occupy.
- **Local authority interest:** There continues to be interest from local authorities in the Heritage Coast definition, including in the extension of an existing Heritage Coast (St Bees Head) and the creation of a new one (on the Lincolnshire Coast). Local authorities see the definition as providing an important 'place making' cache which recognises their environmental quality as places to live, work and visit, and as an opportunity to give greater planning protection in face of high pressure for development.
- **Policy relevance:** Since the last review of Heritage Coasts in 2006, England's coastline and coastal communities have received renewed attention in national policy and there has been increasing levels of partnership working by organisations at the coast. The new focus on marine conservation and the terrestrial-marine interface, is a case in point. Furthermore the national objectives of Heritage Coasts remain as relevant to current national policy priorities, especially those at the coastal interface, as they did when they were developed.
- **National invisibility:** However, with very few exceptions, the recent reviews and statements of national landscape and environmental policy make no reference to the Heritage Coast definition or objectives, and most Heritage Coasts are invisible in national programmes related to these policies. The complete absence of Heritage Coasts from the Landscapes Review is the most obvious example of this. The lack of a national 'champion' for Heritage Coasts, in comparison to AONBs and National Parks is likely to be one reason for this.

3. The extent and character of Heritage Coasts

3.1. This chapter provides an overview of 32 Heritage Coasts, describing where they are found and what makes them special and distinctive.

Location and area

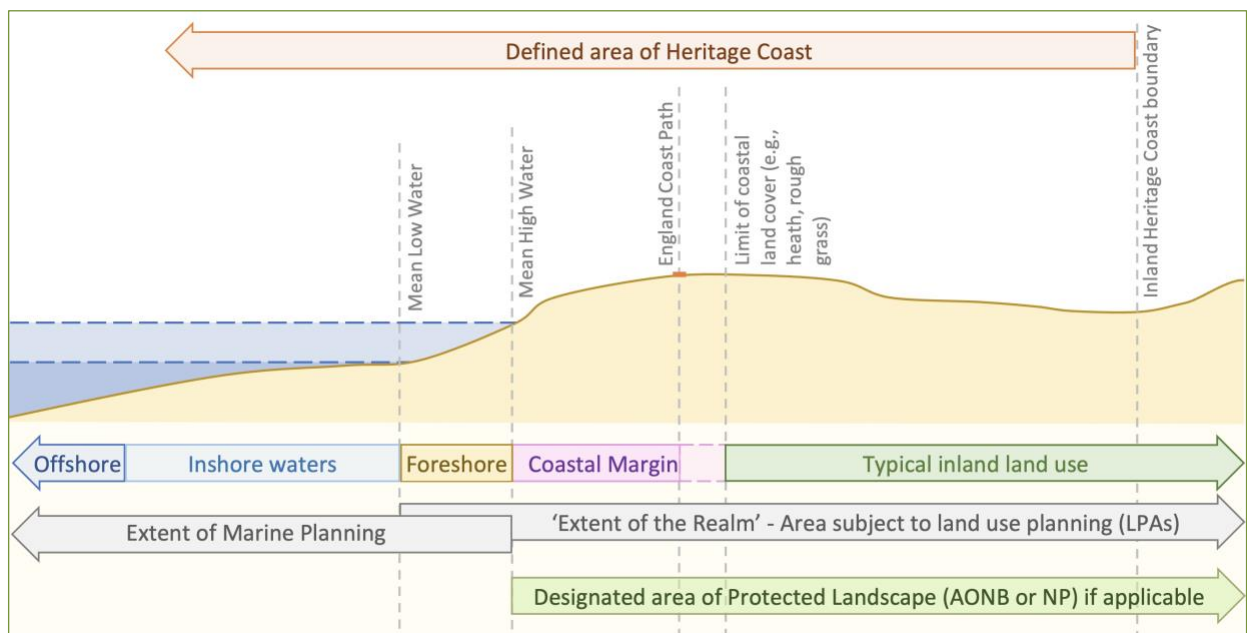
3.2. England’s 32 Heritage Coasts are wrapped around its coastline with particular concentrations in the South West, North East and East Anglia (see report cover). Overall, Heritage Coasts occupy about a fifth of England’s coastline (although for reasons outlined below, quantifying the precise extent of Heritage Coasts is difficult). They have defined landward boundaries which are typically 2km from the coast, but in places can be as narrow as 100m (Spurn) or as wide at 7km (Suffolk and Penwith).

3.3. Heritage Coasts are unique as a spatial definition that straddles the terrestrial–marine boundary. Unlike the designated landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks), all Heritage Coasts extend below Mean Low Water and their third objective addresses the environmental health of their inshore waters.

3.4. Their seaward boundary is not defined with the result that relevant local authorities have discretion as to how far they apply the definition in practice. Several of the AONBs and National Parks define the seaward boundary for planning purposes to be the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) which varies in practice depending on the height of the land at the coast and also to prevailing weather conditions. The Marine Management Organisation has prepared ‘Visual Resource Mapping’ as part of the Marine Plans. However, from the perspective of the marine environment, visibility to or from land is not a deciding issue and the full inshore area (to 12 nautical miles) may be considered important. The Durham Heritage Coast’s Seascapes Project (Box 14, page 39) extends to six miles offshore, again based on the ZVI. The Kent Downs AONB is involved in a UNESCO ‘Sites Across the Channel’ project with the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d’Opale in northern France. Together, these two bodies are seeking UNESCO Global Geopark status for a Cross-Channel Geopark which encompasses the entire channel from the Kent to the French coast.

3.5. As **Figure 3** shows, the Heritage Coast definition covers several distinct zones of land and sea, within the remit of both the terrestrial and marine planning systems.

Figure 3. Schematic diagram showing key zones covered by Heritage Coasts



3.6. Examples of the spatial extent of Heritage Coasts are as follows:

- Those with the largest terrestrial area, measured to Mean High Water, are Penwith (15,562 ha), Purbeck (14,517 ha), South Devon (12,327 ha) and Pentire Point - Widemouth (10,757 ha). Those with the smallest terrestrial areas are Trevoze Head (110 ha), Spurn (302 ha), Rame Head (312 ha) and Dover – Folkestone (317 ha)¹¹.
- Some Heritage Coasts have large areas of foreshore (the area between Mean High Water and Mean Low Water). These include North Northumberland (3,426 ha), North Norfolk (3,141 ha), Spurn (1,449 ha) and Suffolk (1,176 ha).
- Measuring the length of Heritage Coasts is problematic depending on whether Mean High or Low Water is used and whether every inlet, estuary and island is included or a smoother line along the coast is used. North Norfolk's complex marshes and estuaries give it a detailed High Water boundary of 690 km, but a smoothed length of 45 km. Using their smoothed High Water boundaries, the shortest Heritage Coasts are Trevoze Head (2.1 miles), St Bees Head (3.6 miles) and South Foreland (4.7 miles) while the longest are the Isles of Scilly (61 miles), North Northumberland (55 miles) and Purbeck (51 miles).

Relationship with the designated landscapes

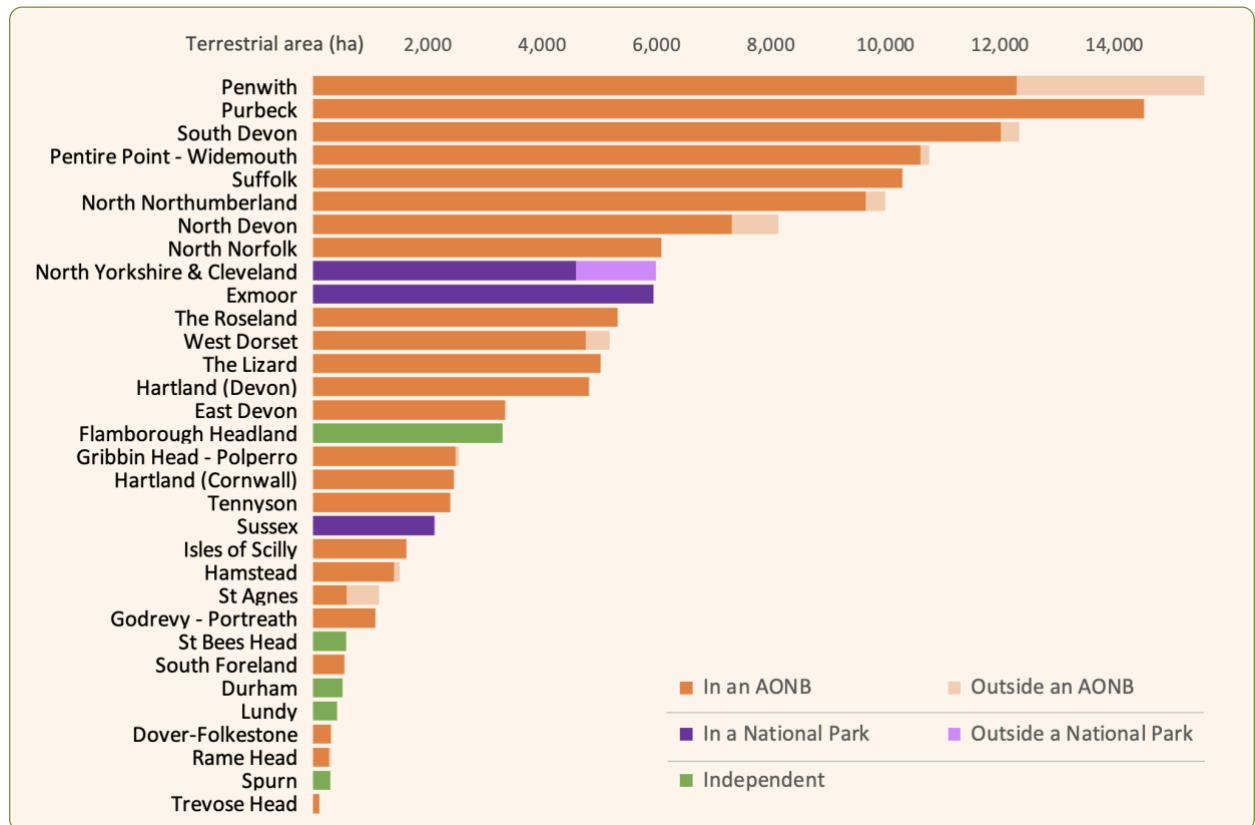
3.7. There is a close relationship between Heritage Coasts and the designated landscapes of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks.

- The terrestrial parts of all but five of the 32 Heritage Coasts lie either entirely or substantially within these designated landscapes. Eighty-seven percent of their land area lies is co-located or associated with AONBs and 10% with National Parks (but see para. 3.8 for 'orphaned' areas outside their boundaries)
- Heritage Coasts that are not associated with designated landscapes are Durham, Flamborough Headland, Spurn, Lundy and St Bees Head. These five Heritage Coasts account for 4% of the total terrestrial area of all Heritage Coasts and approximately 6% of the length.
- Nearly a third of England's AONBs (11 of 36) contain Heritage Coasts and for most of these the Heritage Coast occupies all or the large majority of their coast. These AONBs are Cornwall (which includes ten Heritage Coasts), Dorset, East Devon, Isle of Wight, Isles of Scilly, Kent Downs, Norfolk Coast, North Devon Coast, Northumberland Coast, South Devon and Suffolk Coast and Heaths.
- Heritage Coasts occupy more than a third of the area of five AONBs. These AONBs are the Isles of Scilly and Northumberland Coast (100% of which are Heritage Coast), North Devon Coast (74% Heritage Coast), Cornwall (44%) and South Devon (27%). Other AONBs with large areas of Heritage Coast are the Suffolk Coast and Heaths, Isle of Wight and Dorset.
- A third of England's National Park (3 of 9) also contain Heritage Coasts. These are the Exmoor, North York Moors and South Downs National Parks. Heritage Coasts cover all of Exmoor and the North York Moors' coastline and the large majority of the South Downs, but they occupy a relatively small proportion of the area of these National Parks.
- In contrast, there are seven AONBs and three National Parks with coastlines that do not have Heritage Coasts. These are the Dedham Vale, High Weald, Chichester Harbour, Tamar Valley, Quantock Hills, Arnside and Silverdale, and Solway Coast AONBs and the Broads, New Forest and Lake District National Parks.

¹¹ The data on Heritage Coast areas and lengths in this section were generated using GIS by the authors of this Review. It used the shapefiles for the Heritage Coast boundaries provided by Natural England, projected using the OSGB Coordinate Reference System (EPSG27700). The GIS polylines for Mean High Water and Mean Lower Water were those provided in the Ordnance Survey's Boundary Line dataset. For the smoothed lengths in bullet #3, a simplified Mean High Water polyline with nodes at 50m and excluding estuaries and islands was created. See **Appendix III** for further spatial data.

3.8. While most Heritage Coasts are strongly associated with designated landscapes, their boundaries often do not align, reflecting the different periods and processes of establishment. There are significant parts of some of these Heritage Coasts that lie outside the designated landscapes (so-called ‘orphaned’ areas), which has significant implications for their protection and management, discussed in the following chapter. The largest examples of these Heritage Coasts, relative to their terrestrial area, are St Agnes (47% of its area is outside Cornwall AONB), Penwith (21% outside Cornwall), North Yorkshire – Cleveland (20% outside the North York Moors NP) and North Devon (9% outside the North Devon Coast AONB). Heritage Coasts in Cornwall are the most affected, with 10% of its Heritage Coasts lying outside the AONB¹².

Figure 4. The co-location of Heritage Coasts with designated landscapes



3.9. **Table 3** on the following page summarises the geographical relationship between Heritage Coasts and the designated landscapes, into four categories.

¹² See footnote 11 on the previous page for a description of how the spatial data was derived.

Table 3. The four categories of Heritage Coasts' relationship with the designated landscapes

Heritage Coasts entirely outside designated landscapes: 'The Independent Heritage Coasts'	<i>Durham, Flamborough Headland, Spurn, Lundy and St Bees Head</i>
Heritage Coasts which form a large part of designated landscapes: 'Heritage Coasts co-located with AONBs'	<i>North Northumberland, Isles of Scilly, North Devon, Cornwall HCs and South Devon</i>
Other Heritage Coasts which are strongly associated with and lie within designated landscapes: 'Heritage Coasts closely associated with designated landscapes'	<i>North Norfolk, Suffolk, South Foreland, Dover Folkestone, Sussex, Tennyson, Hamstead, Purbeck, West Dorset, East Devon, Hartland (Devon) and Exmoor</i>
Heritage Coasts, in which more than a fifth of their area lies outside the designated landscape they are associated with: 'Orphaned parts of Heritage Coasts outside designated landscapes'	<i>St Agnes, Penwith and North Yorkshire–Cleveland</i>

Land use and ownership

- 3.10. As expected, given their definition as 'substantially undeveloped' areas (Table 2), the large majority of the terrestrial area of Heritage Coasts is open countryside, with only 2% of their land above Mean High Water being built-up¹³. Agriculture is the dominant land use, accounting for around 83% of their terrestrial area. Woodland accounts for 8% and the remaining area is divided between other semi-natural habitats such as sand dunes and wetlands (5%) and leisure land uses, particularly golf courses (2%)¹⁴.
- 3.11. Overall, the largest category of agricultural land use is arable cropping which accounts for 39% of Heritage Coast land but there is significant variation between individual Heritage Coasts with some such as Lundy, Exmoor and Sussex having little or no arable land and others such as South Foreland, Dover-Folkestone, Flamborough Headland where it exceeds 60% of land use. Pasture covers 33% of Heritage Coasts but again there is significant variation, exceeding 50% of land use in Sussex, North Devon and Hamstead.
- 3.12. Given the predominance of agriculture, most land in the Heritage Coasts is owned privately as part of farms and estates. Based on analysis of data on agri-environment scheme uptake from 2015 (when most farms were in either Entry Level or Higher Level Stewardship), it is estimated that there are around 1,400 separate land holdings in Heritage Coasts, ranging from large estates exceeding 1,000 ha to smallholdings of less than 1 ha. Environmental charities are significant landowners, particularly the National Trust, whose Neptune Coastline Campaign has resulted in it being the largest single landowner, with nearly 12,000 ha in 25 of the 32 Heritage Coasts. The RSPB is likely to be the second largest landowner with nearly 2,000 ha of land held as Reserves in the Purbeck, Suffolk, North Norfolk, Flamborough Headland, St Bees Head and North Northumberland Heritage Coasts. The Wildlife Trusts own 1,700 ha of land in Heritage Coasts and local authorities at least another 800 ha. Overall, it is

¹³ 'Built-up' being defined in reference to the Office for National Statistics 'Built-up Areas' spatial dataset, 2011. Other datasets based on land cover such as that from the Rural Payments Agency's Crop Map of England (CROME) data 2020 have a slightly higher proportion as urban (2.6%).

¹⁴ Land use figures based on GIS analysis of the 2018 Corine Land Cover Data. <https://land.copernicus.eu/pan-european/corine-land-cover>. Appendix V shows a breakdown for an alternative dataset which is the Rural Payments Agency's Crop Map of England (CROME) data 2020.

estimated that around 12% of land in Heritage Coasts is owned by organisations with environmental or other public good objectives.

The Coastal Strip

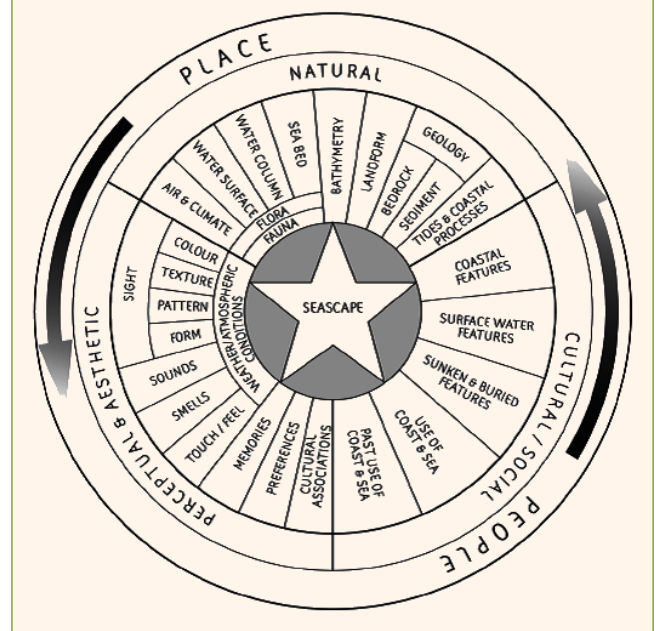
- 3.13. **Figure 3** showed that Heritage Coasts include two distinct zones of land use, with the strip closest to the coast generally consisting of semi-natural habitats rather than intensively farmed land. **Figure 3** refers to this area as the 'coastal margin', which is defined in **Box 4**.
- 3.14. The term 'coastal strip' is used here because it doesn't have the same legal status as 'coastal margin'. The width of the strip varies depending on topography and exposure. In the North Northumberland Heritage Coast a strip of sand dunes and low-lying coastal heathland typically extends back 300-400m from High Water and in North Norfolk there are extensive areas of salt marsh and intertidal mudflats up to 2km wide.
- 3.15. The high scenic value of the coastal strip means that areas managed specifically for public leisure such as countryside parks, golf courses, tourism attractions and caravan parks tend to be concentrated in this area. Examples including White Cliffs Countryside in the Dover-Folkestone Heritage Coast, the Land's End Attraction in Penwith, the Royal West Norfolk Golf Club in North Norfolk and the Flamborough Headland Golf Course. In contrast, intensive arable farming comes to within a few metres of the cliff tops in Heritage Coasts such as Dover-Folkestone and parts of East Devon.
- 3.16. On the assumption that a 500m strip back from Mean High Water represents the average width of this strip in Heritage Coasts, GIS analysis shows that semi natural habitats account for nearly a third of land use in this coastal strip, compared to a fifth of land use in Heritage Coasts as a whole.
- 3.17. The contrast between land use in Heritage Coasts and the rest of England's coastline is particularly marked in this narrow coastal strip. Outside of Heritage Coasts, 19% of the 500m-wide coastal strip is built-up. In Heritage Coasts, just 3% of this coastal strip is built-up.

Box 4. The Coastal Margin is a term which is used specifically in relation to the England Coast Path and is defined as the area between Mean High Water and the coast path or, where agreement has been reached with the landowner, the field boundary beyond the coast path. Unless specifically exempted, public rights of access will apply to the whole of the coastal margin. See Natural England publication NE446: Coastal Access - Natural England's Approved Scheme 2013.

Seascape

3.18. Seascape Character Assessment has emerged as a new discipline within environmental planning since the last review of Heritage Coasts in 2006. Like Landscape Character Assessment, it recognises that all areas of sea matter to people and that their character is a combination of natural, cultural/social and perceptual/aesthetic features (Figure 5)¹⁵. Thus the character of an area of sea in a Heritage Coast will incorporate physical features such as the depth and geology of the sea bed and the movement and colour of the water; cultural elements such as fishing activities, navigation marks and marine wrecks; and perceptual elements such as the sounds and smells of the sea and coastline, views to the horizon and to the shore from the sea, and people's individual memories of experiences at the coast.

Figure 5. The Seascape Character Wheel ⁷



- 3.19. Heritage Coasts' marine extent, with no defined seaward boundary, means that their seascape character is just as important to their scenic value as their landscape character. However, the newness of Seascape Character Assessment as a discipline means that few of the Heritage Coasts have had their distinctive seascapes described. The Durham Heritage Coast, which has been running a SeaScapes Project with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, is a notable exception (See Box 14, page 39).
- 3.20. All of England's coastline has been covered by Seascape Character Assessments as evidence for the Marine Plans produced by the Marine Management Organisation. The Seascape Character Areas described in the Marine Plans are large and cover much more than individual Heritage Coasts. They form a good basis for better understanding of the special marine and coastal characteristics of Heritage Coasts.

"England's coastal and inshore environments are diverse and incredibly important to distinctiveness of landscape and seascape character; they are also under significant pressures of often rapid change. In light of the drive for nature recovery, the terrestrial/inshore coastal zone needs to be managed carefully, including all the freshwater riverine environments that connect with it, to take a more geographically integrated approach."

Environmental designations and protection

3.21. The co-location of most Heritage Coasts with the designated landscapes has already been described. There is a similar close geographical relationship between Heritage Coasts and nature conservation and historic environment designations.

Nature Conservation designations

3.22. Overall, Heritage Coasts are rich in designated sites. Well over quarter (28%) of Heritage Coasts terrestrial area (to Mean Low Water – i.e. including the foreshore) is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Over three quarters of Spurn, North Norfolk, Dover-Folkestone and Lundy Heritage Coasts are SSSI. Focussing in on the 500m-wide coastal strip, 37% of all Heritage Coasts are designated as SSSI.

¹⁵ Natural England (2012). An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment. NE Commissioned Report NECR105. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2729852>

- 3.23. Several of the Heritage Coasts have large National Nature Reserves (NNR) including the Farne Islands and Lindisfarne NNRs in North Northumberland, Holkham and Blakeney NNR in North Norfolk, the Suffolk Coast NNR and the Studland and Godlingston Heath NNR in Purbeck. As noted above, the RSPB and Wildlife Trust also manage areas as nature reserves in Heritage Coasts.
- 3.24. Two of England's three UNESCO Biosphere Reserves contain Heritage Coasts (Lundy and North Devon Heritage Coasts in the North Devon Biosphere Reserve and Hamtead and Tennyson in the Isles of Wight Biosphere Reserve. The Sussex Heritage Coast lies a few miles to the East of England's third Biosphere Reserve of Brighton and Lewes Downs.
- 3.25. Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), which have been established as statutory designations since the last review of Heritage Coasts are also strongly associated with Heritage Coasts. Of the 32 Heritage Coasts, 22 have MCZs off their shores (the lack of a seaward boundary to Heritage Coasts does not make quantitative analysis possible).

Historic environment designations

- 3.26. Turning to the historic environment, Heritage Coasts have a high concentration of sites of historic and cultural importance. There are 848 Scheduled Monuments located in Heritage Coasts, covering all periods of human history from prehistoric field systems and settlements on the Isles of Scilly to a World War II Radar station in the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast. Overall, the density of Scheduled Monuments in Heritage Coasts is higher than in the designated landscapes (0.53 Scheduled Monuments per km² compared to 0.47 in the designated landscapes) and much higher than across England as a whole (0.15). Of the 54 Protected Wreck Sites found off England's coast, 28 (52%) lie off Heritage Coasts, with a particularly high density in the South West.
- 3.27. Two of England's World Heritage Sites (WHS) contain Heritage Coasts. These are the Dorset and East Devon Jurassic Coast WHS (Purbeck, West Dorset and East Devon Heritage Coasts) and the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape WHS (Penwith and St Agnes Heritage Coasts). The Jurassic Coast WHS is strongly co-located with the three Heritage Coasts, their linear extends being similar, although the Heritage Coasts extend offshore and further inshore. In contrast, the majority of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape WHS lies outside Heritage Coasts.

Beyond designations

- 3.28. It is important to point out that designated sites do not adequately describe the richness or complexity of the landscapes and seascapes of Heritage Coasts. Historic Environment Records held by local authorities, Local Wildlife Sites described by Environmental Records Centres and the range of landscape and seascape features described in a range of documents all contribute to our knowledge of the *exceptionally fine scenic quality and features of special significance and interest, whether natural or man-made* that are the basis for the definition of Heritage Coasts (**Table 2**).

Public access

- 3.29. Ever since the development of mass tourism in the 19th century, England's coasts have been popular destinations leading to many coastal settlements becoming popular resorts. Natural England's People and Nature Survey¹⁶ shows the enduring popularity of the coast, with nearly a third of adults reporting in the summer of 2021 that they visited beaches and other coastline at least once a year.
- 3.30. The extent of statutory public access to and along the coast has varied across the country but the England Coast Path, created as part of The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, is creating a National Trail 2,795 miles in length around the entire coastline. The England Coast Path builds on the existing

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/people-and-nature-survey-for-england>

rights of way network and on coastal stretches of existing National Trails such as the Cleveland Way (opened 1969), South Downs Way (1972), South West Coast Path (1978), North Downs Way (1978) and Norfolk Coast Path (1986), all of which run through Heritage Coasts. Other locally designated long-distance paths that run through Heritage Coasts include the Durham Coastal Path, the Suffolk Coast Path, and Isle of Wight Coast and Cumbria Coastal Way.

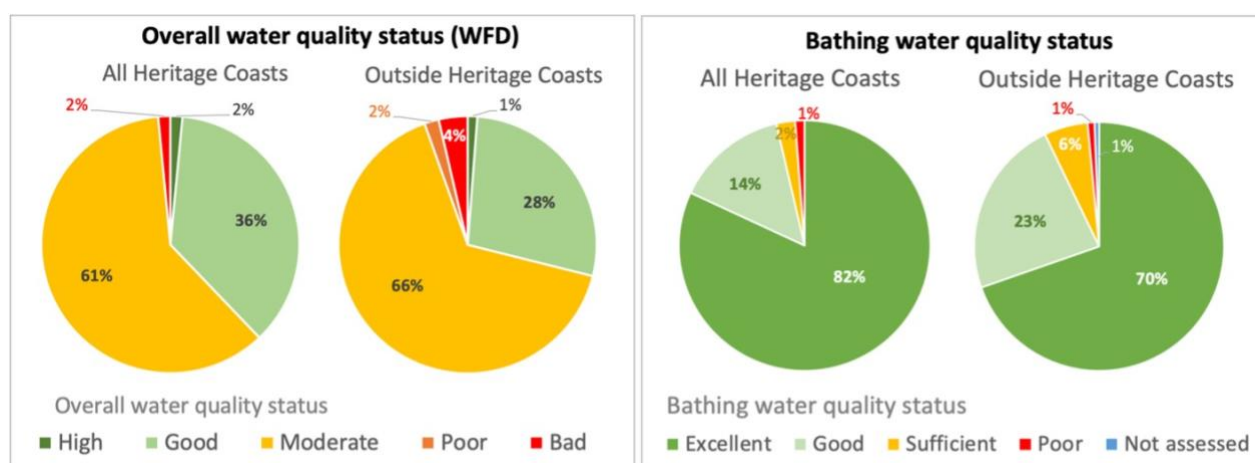
3.31. As noted earlier (**Box 4**), the creation of the England Coast Path involves defining a Coastal Margin in which the National Trail is located and over which public access is permitted (subject to specific exclusions). To date (April 2022), the coastal margin has been established, and access rights opened, along roughly a quarter of its full length, including in all of part of eight Heritage Coasts. These are North Northumberland (southern part only), Durham, North Yorkshire & Cleveland, Dover-Folkestone, South Foreland, Sussex, Purbeck (western part) and St Bees Head Heritage Coasts. Natural England is progressing work in other areas.

Water quality

3.32. The quality of our coastal waters is monitored by the Environment Agency in line with the goal in the 25 Year Environment Plan for “at least three quarters of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as is practicable” based on the methodology set out in EU Water Framework and Bathing Water Directives as transmitted into UK law following Brexit. Ecological and chemical status is monitored in 166 ‘transitional and coastal waterbodies’ around England’s coasts. Although these areas do not fit precisely with the marine boundaries of Heritage Coasts, a comparison can be made between the status of waterbodies in which Heritage Coasts occur with other waterbodies. Similarly, the quality of water for bathing is monitored in 143 coastal and estuarine locations and a comparison can be made between these locations in Heritage Coasts and those outside Heritage Coasts.

3.33. **Figure 6** shows the most up to date reported data from the two types of monitoring. Although the categories of quality are different, the overall results are similar. They show that water quality is, on average, better in Heritage Coasts than in other coastal areas. This relationship is likely to reflect the undeveloped nature of Heritage Coasts rather than specific action in Heritage Coasts to improve water quality (see paras. 5.26 *et sequ.*).

Figure 6. Comparison of water quality in Heritage Coasts and other coastal areas

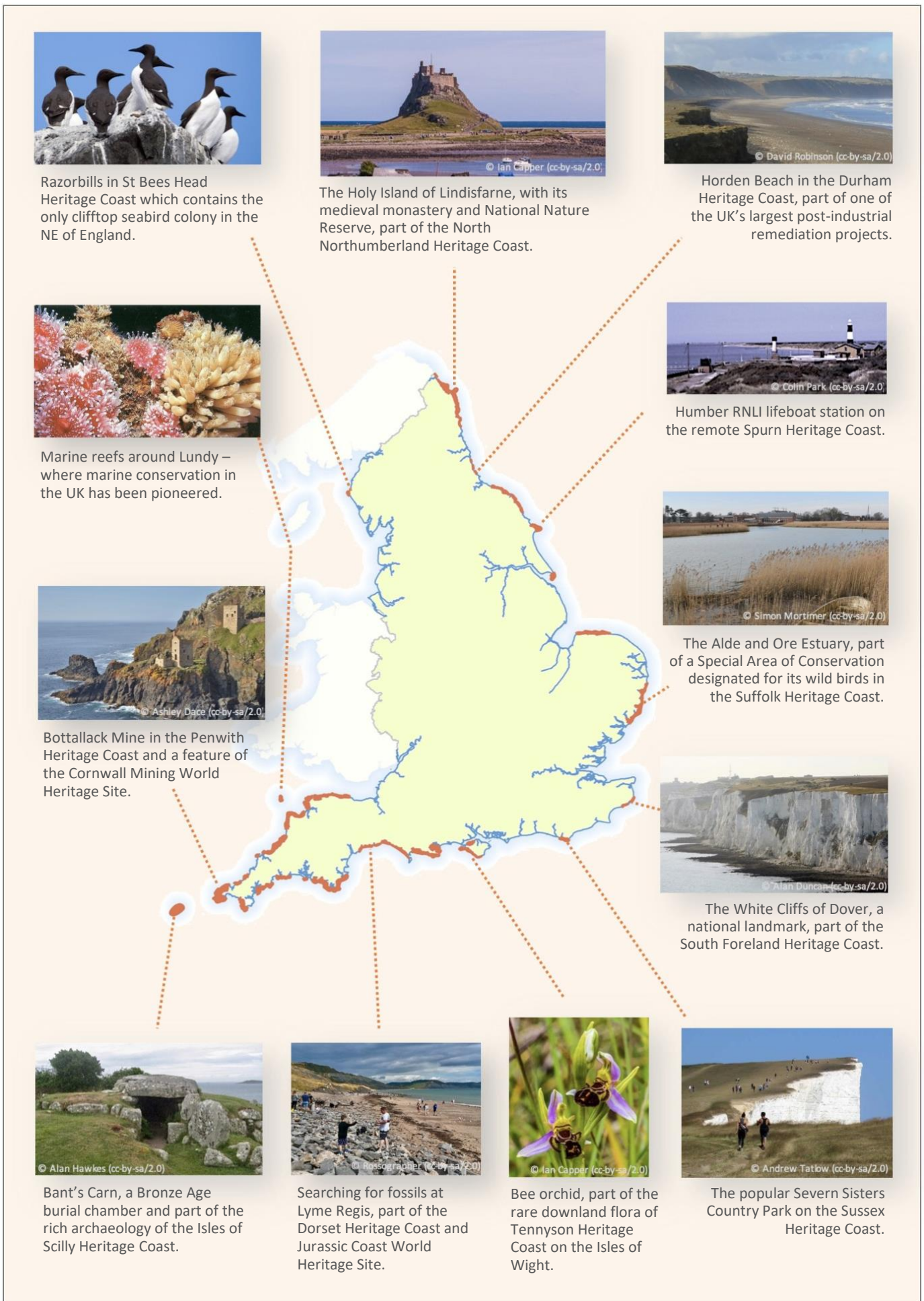


Sources:

WFD water quality: <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/41cb73a1-91b7-4a36-80f4-b4c6e102651a/wfd-classification-status-cycle-2>

Bathing water quality: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>

Figure 7. Examples of features of special significance and interest found in Heritage Coasts



Socio-economic characteristics

- 3.34. Although Heritage Coasts were defined for their scenic and environmental qualities, two of their four national objectives focus on their value to people and society (**Table 1**). It is therefore relevant to consider their socio-economic characteristics.

People living in and close to Heritage Coasts

- 3.35. The terrestrial boundaries of Heritage Coasts were tightly drawn around areas of high scenic value and deliberately excluded developed land (as noted earlier in para. 3.10, only 2% of their land area is built-up). Analysis of population census data (2011) by this study estimates that around 100,000 people or 46,000 households live inside Heritage Coasts (with half of these people living in six Heritage Coasts: Penwith (10,200 population), South Devon (8,700), North Devon (8,500), Suffolk (7,400), North Northumberland (6,300) and Purbeck (6,300). Data for all Heritage Coasts are provided in Appendix IV.
- 3.36. However, there are much larger populations who live close to Heritage Coasts. Nearly a quarter of a million people live on the doorstep (within 2km, or a short walk) of Heritage Coasts, with the most largest populations being close to the Durham (73,833 people), North Yorkshire & Cleveland (68,034), Purbeck (59,164), West Dorset (55,607) and South Devon (50,006) Heritage Coasts.
- 3.37. **Figure 8** show the parts of England that lie within driving distances of 30 and 60 minutes of Heritage Coasts – 30 minutes being a period people might consider for an afternoon visit to the coast, and an hour being a period easily accessible for a weekend visit. Overall, 3.6 million people, or 7% of England’s population live within a 30-minute drive of a Heritage Coast and 10.5 million people (20% of the population) are within an hour’s drive.

Social and economic issues in Heritage Coasts

- 3.38. As noted in the previous chapter (para. 2.13), there has been growing interest in the issues facing many of England’s coastal communities. A report by the consultancy EG Radius in 2020¹⁷ showed that coastal towns are significantly more deprived than England as a whole and that within coastal local authorities, towns on the coast are more deprived than others in the authority area. Although this deprivation is evident in low incomes and employment, it is particularly stark in terms of poor health outcomes (also see **Box 3**) and in crime rates. The EG Radius report also highlighted the reliance of many coastal communities on lower paid, seasonal and less reliable economic sectors including non-food retail, pubs and restaurants, tourism accommodation and arts and leisure.
- 3.39. Analysis by this study shows a significant range in the levels of deprivation experienced by people living in and immediately adjacent to Heritage Coasts (**Figure 9**). Those in the north east (Durham, North Northumberland and North Yorkshire & Cleveland) experience high levels of deprivation whereas many of those in the south and south west (e.g. East Devon, Hamstead and the Isles of Scilly) experience low levels of deprivation. An issue which faces communities in the more prosperous areas is the limited supply of housing that is affordable to people working in some of the lower paid sectors. This is a particular issue in areas like South Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where lack of affordable housing is limiting recruitment in tourism, social care and some parts of the public sector.

“Much of our work is about making coastal communities more vibrant and self-sufficient, although this will bring change in the form of more tourist infrastructure such as temporary mobile home parks and other commercial development.”

¹⁷ EG Radius (2020). Turning the Tide – Seaside Regeneration. <https://www.eg.co.uk/resources/turning-the-tide-seaside-regeneration/>

Figure 8. Areas within easy travel distance to Heritage Coasts

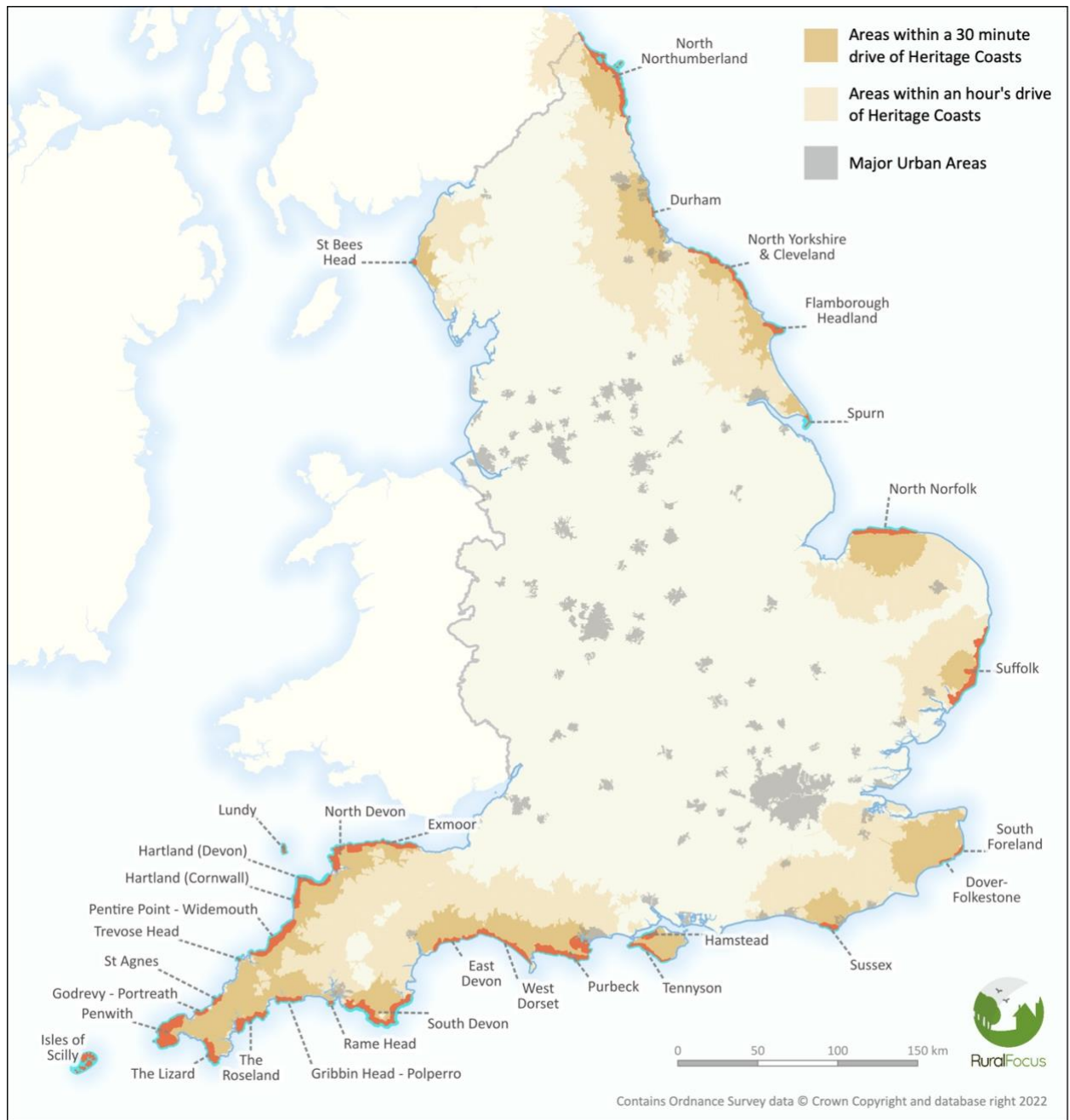
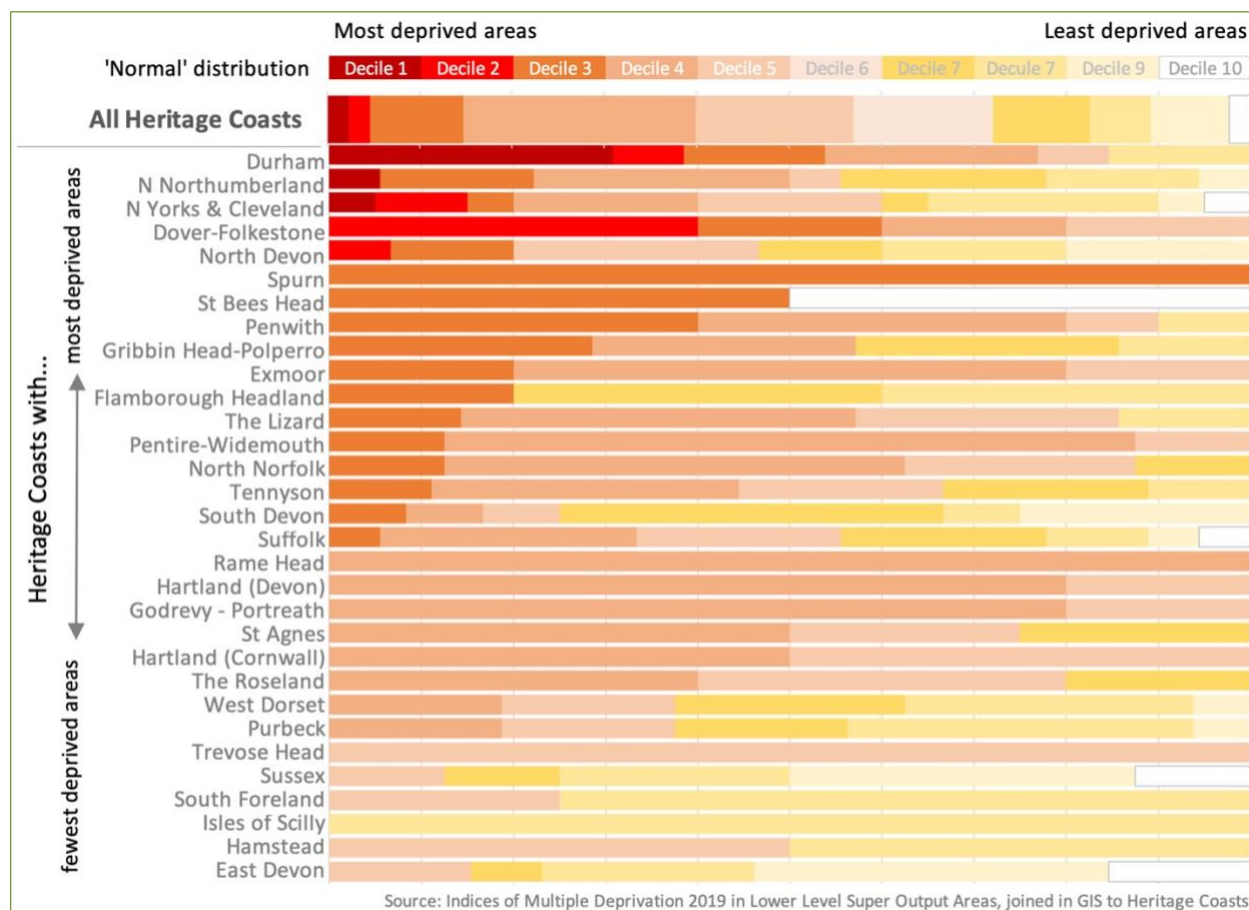


Figure 9. Levels of multiple deprivation in Heritage Coasts



- 3.40. A significant differentiation between Heritage Coasts and the designated landscapes, which affects their relationship with local communities, is their smaller size and tightly constrained boundaries that exclude most developed land, but also, given the highly developed nature of much of England’s coastline, their proximity to urban areas. Many Heritage Coasts therefore have fewer people living in them than many of the designated landscapes but are closer to centres of population.
- 3.41. When reviewing the coverage of Heritage Coasts in England, it is interesting to note that there are some relatively undeveloped and scenic stretches of coast close to urban populations that are not defined as Heritage Coast. Some are within AONBs and National Parks such as Arnside and Silverdale, the New Forest and Chichester Harbour and some in non-designated areas such as the estuaries of Essex and the Sefton coast in the North West. This reflects the historical identification of Heritage Coasts in the post-War period and by the Countryside Commission in the 1970s (para. 2.4) and there is no suggestion that such stretches of coast would meet the demanding quality criteria of the Heritage Coast definition.
- 3.42. However, it may be that these non-defined areas of undeveloped coastal areas close to centres of population will warrant attention in the context of the levelling up and nature recovery priorities now being pursued by Government. Natural England may wish to examine how these areas, alongside the defined Heritage Coasts, are included in its work on an All England Strategic Landscape Mapping Assessment Tool and its consideration of future alternative landscape approaches.

Key findings from this chapter

- **Location and area:** Heritage Coasts occupy about a fifth of England's coastline. They have defined landward boundaries which are typically 2km from the coast (but in places are as narrow as 100m or as wide as 7km). They are unique as a spatial definition in straddling the terrestrial–marine boundary and extending below Mean Low Water, although their seaward boundary is not defined.
- **Co-location with the designated landscapes:** The large majority of Heritage Coasts lie within designated landscapes (AONBs and NPs), only Durham, Flamborough Headland, Spurn, Lundy and St Bees Head lie entirely outside a designated landscape. Heritage Coasts make up all or a large proportion of five AONBs (the Isles of Scilly, Northumberland Coast, North Devon Coast, Cornwall and South Devon AONBs) and cover all of Exmoor and the North York Moors' coastline and the large majority of the South Downs'. However, significant parts of some of these Heritage Coasts lie outside 'their' designated landscapes, creating anomalous boundaries.
- **Substantially undeveloped but close to large populations:** Only 2% of Heritage Coasts are built-up, and Heritage Coasts represent a high proportion of England's undeveloped coast. However, some Heritage Coasts have large populations on their doorstep (e.g. Durham, North Yorkshire and Cleveland, Purbeck, West Dorset and South Devon) and a fifth of England's population live within an hours drive of a Heritage Coast, making them highly accessible for recreation and enjoyment. In relative terms, many Heritage Coasts are both less developed but more accessible to people than many of the designated landscapes. There are some other stretches of undeveloped and scenic coast that are close to centres of population but are not defined as Heritage Coast.
- **Patterns of land use:** A feature of most Heritage Coasts' landscape is the narrow coastal strip (often around 500m wide) which consists of coastal habitats such as cliff and foreshore, salt marsh, mudflats, coastal heathland and unimproved pasture. A high proportion of their 'features of special significance and interest' and recreational activity are in this strip and it is likely to coincide with the statutorily defined coastal margin being created as part of the England Coast Path. Inland of this strip, land use tends to be dominated by farming (some by arable cropping, others by pasture) and is usually typical of that extending outside the defined area.
- **Environmental significance:** Heritage Coasts are rich in designated sites, with over a quarter of their area designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a high concentration of Scheduled Monuments and high levels of ownership and management by environmental bodies, particularly the National Trust. Heritage Coasts' marine extent means that their seascape character is just as important to their scenic value as their landscape character. However, the newness of Seascape Character Assessment as a discipline means that few of the Heritage Coasts have had their distinctive seascapes described.
- **Social challenges:** Communities in and close to Heritage Coasts face significant social and economic issues including high levels of multiple deprivation (e.g. Durham, North Northumberland and North Yorkshire & Cleveland) and a lack of affordable housing for local workers (e.g. South Devon, Cornwall Heritage Coasts and the Isles of Scilly).

4. Strategic approaches and planning

- 4.1. This chapter examines the structures and processes that are in place in Heritage Coasts to assist the defining local authorities and their partners address the national objectives. It starts by looking at the role of partnerships and strategic management plans covering Heritage Coasts. It looks at how Heritage Coasts are protected by planning policy (in land use, marine and national infrastructure development) and how use of the Heritage Coast definition contributes to place making and community development. Finally, the national guidance and liaison supporting Heritage Coasts is reviewed. Evidence on the delivery of the four national objectives of Heritage Coasts is examined in Chapter 5.
- 4.2. Information for this chapter taken from a range of sources including the online surveys (para 1.5) particularly the responses from staff who are leading work in Heritage Coasts, and from discussions with key national and regional stakeholders in workshops and interviews.

Partnerships and stakeholder involvement

- 4.3. Unlike the designated landscapes, formal partnerships involving a range of stakeholders in the public, charitable and private sector have never been a core feature of most Heritage Coasts. They do not appear to have been a requirement of the Countryside Agency’s Heritage Coast programme. The 2006 Review showed that in 1993, governance of most Heritage Coasts was undertaken by the local authority coast and countryside service, reporting to council committees. By 2005, the designated landscapes had taken on the remit of supporting their Heritage Coast (i.e. AONB Joint Advisory Committees and National Park Authorities) and outside designated landscapes a variety of structure existed such as a dedicated Heritage Coast Partnership in Durham and the Lundy Marine Management Group for Lundy.
- 4.4. This situation remains largely the same today, but with moves to broaden involvement to include representatives of the charitable and private sectors. In line with national expectations for stakeholder engagement by public bodies, all the designated landscapes have established larger partnerships through which much of their work is now done. **Figure 10** shows the membership structure of the Norfolk Coast AONB Partnership which is typical of AONBs that cover Heritage Coasts.

Figure 10. Membership of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, typical of most AONB Partnerships covering Heritage Coasts



- 4.5. **Table 4** shows the current partnership arrangements supporting the Heritage Coast, as reported by the relevant lead officers in each area. Partnerships that are specifically dedicated to the definition are found in the Durham and Sussex Heritage Coasts, although the continuation of the Sussex Partnership is under review. A further four Heritage Coasts are effectively looked after by partnerships because of the strong location of their geographies (the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership for South Foreland and Dover-Folkstone, the Isles of Scilly AONB Partnership and the Lundy Management Forum), although only the latter two cover their offshore areas, with membership to fully reflect that.
- 4.6. All other Heritage Coasts (with the exception of St Bees Head which is not covered by a partnership) are reported to fall within the remit of partnerships that cover larger areas, including designated landscape partnerships and other regional partnerships such as the Yorkshire Coast Marine Partnership (created in 2021) and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Forum. However, in practice, when looking at the terms of reference or remit of these broader geographical partnerships, there is usually little reference, if any of the Heritage Coast definition.
- 4.7. Most of these Partnerships cover terrestrial areas only (and therefore have no remit over Heritage Coasts' offshore areas). Exceptions to this, where partners include marine bodies or expertise such as the Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities, are the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership and South Devon AONB Partnership, also the Isles of Scilly AONB Partnership and Lundy Management Forum mentioned above.

“The AONB Partnership is still seen as a terrestrial organisation, we are such a coastal AONB that we cannot be only terrestrial.”

Table 4. Partnership arrangements covering Heritage Coasts, 2022

Heritage Coasts (in clockwise order)	Heritage Coast Partnership	Other partnerships that include the definition in their remit (as reported by lead staff)
North Northumberland		Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership
Durham	●	Durham Heritage Coast Partnership
North Yorkshire and Cleveland		North York Moors National Park Authority and Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership
Flamborough Head and Spurn		Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership
North Norfolk		Norfolk Coast Partnership
Suffolk		Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB Partnership
S Foreland + Dover-Folkstone	❖	White Cliffs Countryside Partnership , Kent Downs AONB Partnership
Sussex	●	Sussex Heritage Coast Partnership . South Downs
Tennyson and Hampstead		Isle of Wight AONB Partnership
Purbeck + West Dorset		Dorset AONB Partnership, Dorset Coast Forum, Jurassic Coast WHS Forum
East Devon		East Devon AONB Partnership, Jurassic Coast WHS Forum
South Devon		South Devon AONB Partnership
Cornwall Heritage Coasts (10)		Cornwall AONB Partnership
Isles of Scilly	❖	Isles of Scilly AONB Partnership
Lundy	❖	Lundy Management Forum, advised by the Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group (LMPAAG)
North Devon		North Devon Coast AONB Partnership
Exmoor		Exmoor National Park Partnership
St Bees Head		-
● Explicitly related to the Heritage Coast		❖ Geographically strongly co-located with the Heritage Coast

Appendix VII provides more information on local partnerships and forums based on survey responses from the lead officers in each Heritage Coast area.

4.8. Prior to the Covid pandemic, most of these partnerships tended to meet between two and four times a year. The pandemic has paused formal meetings of most of these Partnerships since March 2020, although some have continued to meet online. It is likely that online meetings will become the norm for many partnerships in future, at least for some of their meetings.

“A partnership approach is essential to find the right balance of interventions that continue to see the Heritage Coast thrive as an asset for wellbeing for all, while protecting our most vulnerable visitors.”

4.9. The survey of people involved in Heritage Coasts asked them whether they were involved in a partnership or forum that supported their Heritage Coast. The results show that 30% were full members of a partnership or forum; that 40% have been invited to attend meetings on a periodic basis and 20% were not aware of there being a partnership or forum. Two thirds of respondents felt the work of the partnership or forum was highly relevant in achieving the national objectives of Heritage Coasts and only 10% felt it less relevant as the partnership or forum as it covered a much larger area. In terms of the time and resources that individuals can commit to support partnerships and forums, a quarter felt they could commit enough time and resources, but nearly half felt that other commitments and pressures meant they were not able to provide as much input to the partnership or forum on coastal issues as they would like to.

Strategic management plans

4.10. The situation with strategic environmental management plans covering Heritage Coasts is similar to that with their partnership structures. Although Heritage Coast Management Plans were produced when they were defined and most appear to have been updated during the period of Countryside Agency funding, by 2005, the 2006 Review found that most Heritage Coasts in designated landscapes were covered by the AONB or NP statutory management plan, with only five Heritage Coasts having a dedicated management plan.

4.11. At the current time, only three Heritage Coasts have dedicated plans (**Table 5**), of which one (Sussex) is currently out of date and may not be revised. The two current plans are the Durham Heritage Coast Plan, and the Lundy Marine Management Plan. The Durham plan was published in 2018 and covers the period to 2025. It has the backing of the local authorities, managing agencies and stakeholders and sets out a vision and objectives for delivering the vision, with reference to the national objectives of the definition. The Lundy Marine Management Plan was published in 2017 and is a comprehensive account of the measures to address issues relevant to the protection of Lundy’s Marine Protected Area, including the island itself. However, unlike the Durham Heritage Coast Plan, the Lundy Plan makes no reference to the Heritage Coast definition or its national objectives.

4.12. The other stretches of Heritage Coast, with the exception of Flamborough Head, Spurn, and St Bees Head are covered by protected landscape management plans. These AONB and National Park management plans address Heritage Coast management to varying degrees of completeness. In some there may be passing reference to the Heritage Coast Designation, but no real policy and delivery options. In others such as the Kent Downs AONB management plan there is a dedicated Heritage Coast section and signposting to other relevant studies. This comprehensive consideration of the South Foreland + Dover-Folkstone stretch of Heritage Coast, may in part be due to the high profile and intense activity in the Straights of Dover.

4.13. **Box 5** shows the text in the Dorset AONB Management referring to the Heritage Coast. This is typical of references to the definition in other designated landscape management plans.

Table 5. Strategic environmental management plans covering Heritage Coasts

Heritage Coasts (in clockwise order)	Dedicated HC Plan	AONB / NP Plan	Other Plans & Strategies (as reported by lead staff, excluding Local Plans)
North Northumberland		❖	North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan 2017-32
Durham	●		
North Yorkshire and Cleveland		❖	North Yorks & Cleveland Coastal Forum Strategy 2012–17
Flamborough Head and Spurn			
North Norfolk		❖	
Suffolk		●	
S Foreland + Dover-Folkstone		●	Seascape assessment of the Strait of Dover 2015
Sussex	●	❖	
Tennyson and Hampstead		❖	
Purbeck + West Dorset		●	Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan
East Devon		❖	Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan
South Devon		●	South Devon Estuaries Environmental Management Plan 2018-24
Cornwall Heritage Coasts (10)		❖	
Isles of Scilly		❖	
Lundy	●		North Devon Coast AONB Management Plan 2019-24
North Devon		●	UNESCO North Devon Biosphere Reserve Strategy for Sustainable Development 2014-2024
Exmoor		❖	
St Bees Head			
●: Specific sections on the Heritage Coast		❖: No sections specific to the Heritage Coast	

Appendix VI provides more information on strategic plans in Heritage Coasts based on survey responses from the lead officers in each area.

Box 5. Section from the Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-24 referring to Heritage Coasts

There are also two Heritage Coasts within the AONB – West Dorset and Purbeck. Heritage Coasts are stretches of largely undeveloped coastline of exceptional or very good scenic quality. While not a statutory designation, they are a material consideration in planning terms and are defined with the aim of protecting their special qualities from development and other pressures. Their statutory protection is delivered through the AONB designation where they overlap.

- 4.14. There are a number of possible explanations for the lack of dedicated Heritage Coast plans and the generally cursory reference to Heritage Coasts and their objectives in designated landscape plans. One is that Heritage Coasts are adequately served by designated landscape plans, the objectives of which are often very similar to those of Heritage Coasts. Another is that local authorities and their partners prefer to focus their limited resources into the designated landscape plans they are statutorily required to prepare rather than Heritage Coast plans that they are not. Another possible explanation is that Heritage Coast protection is addressed through Local Plans (see below) and that separate strategic environmental management plans are not seen to be required.
- 4.15. The truth may be a mixture of all three. However, it is important to be recognised that there are three significant disadvantages to the lack of Heritage Coast plans. The first is that their marine areas are usually not covered in designated landscape plans, meaning that seascape enhancement, conservation of marine biodiversity and heritage, management of water-based recreation and the health of inshore waters will not be addressed in these documents. The second is that in designated landscape plans

covering much larger areas, the importance and needs of “the features of special significance and interest” for which Heritage Coasts were defined may be overlooked (this is evident in the lack of detail of Heritage Coasts’ ‘special character’ – see para. 4.26 below). Finally, the preparation of a dedicated Heritage Coast plan can provide the ‘glue’ that draws an effective partnership of stakeholders together and can provide a good basis for applications for external project funding. In addition, ‘orphaned’ terrestrial areas of Heritage Coasts that are associated with designated landscapes (para. 3.7), but are actually outside their boundaries, are entirely excluded from any management plan.

- 4.16. There was no enthusiasm from participants to this study for separate strategic plans to be prepared for Heritage Coasts that are within designated landscapes. However, there may be opportunities and merit in designated landscape plans providing better coverage of their Heritage Coasts, particular a description of their features of special significance and interest and a list of actions to delivery their objectives. There is also scope for designated landscape management plans to take a broader approach to plan boundaries to include ‘orphaned’ terrestrial areas of Heritage Coast outside their designated areas.

Planning policy

- 4.17. The planning system in England, as it effects Heritage Coasts, is effectively organised at three levels: terrestrial planning (above mean high water) overseen by local planning authorities, marine planning overseen by the Marine Management Organisation and national infrastructure planning overseen by the Planning Inspectorate. Each of these is considered separately in this section.

Terrestrial planning by local planning authorities

- 4.18. Since 2012, statutory guidance on the local planning system in England has been provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The protection of Heritage Coasts is contained within NPPF section 15 (as revised in July 2021). Paragraph 178 states that: *“Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 176 [AONBs and National Parks]), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character”*.
- 4.19. Paragraph 178 of the current NPPF is more specific about the protection of Heritage Coast than was the case previously. Before the NPPF was introduced, local planning authorities were expected to follow Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Notes. PPG 20: Coastal Planning, which was published in September 1992, stated (paragraph 4.15) *“The Government acknowledges the success of Heritage Coasts in articulating appropriate planning and management policies. The planning policies to be pursued in Heritage Coast areas should be incorporated within development plans. The role of the Heritage Coast and the uses and activities which are or are not likely to be permitted should be defined. Local plans should contain clear policies on public access to the coast”*. The level of planning protection given to Heritage Coasts was therefore determined locally. The first edition of the NPPF, published in March 2012 stated (paragraph 114) *“Local planning authorities should ... maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast”*. The requirement for development to be compatible with its ‘special character’ was introduced into the 2018 revision of the NPPF (then at paragraph 173). The reference to ‘special character’ is addressed in more detail below (para. 4.24).

4.20. Paragraph 178 makes clear that where a Heritage Coast is within a designated landscape, the earlier paragraphs 176 and 177 are expected to take precedence, applying a higher level of planning protection.

4.21. Reviews of the Local Plans covering all Heritage Coasts including those in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks show that all include a specific policy recognising the importance of the Heritage Coast and giving a presumption against development (See **Box 6** for an example from the South Downs Local Plan). Appendix VIII describes how Local Plans in Heritage Coast address protection of the definition. Natural England is the statutory consultee on planning applications relating to these policies. Government is currently considering a recommendation of the Landscapes Review that AONBs become statutory consultees on planning applications within their AONB.

“We find the Heritage Coast difficult to deal with in the planning process, because there is not as much legislative weighting as the designated landscapes. The objectives are difficult to use as they are often conflicting and become subjective. There is no active management strategy for our Heritage Coast. We have mostly had to rely on the NPPF to give us the backing that we needed to object to planning applications.”

Box 6. South Downs Local Plan 2014-31. Strategic Policy SD18: The Open Coast

Development proposals within the Sussex Heritage Coast area and the undeveloped coastal zone of the National Park, as defined on the Policies Map, will not be permitted unless they:

- a) Meet one of the following two criteria:
 - i. Are appropriate to the coastal location and conserve and enhance the character of the Heritage Coast/undeveloped National Park coastline; or
 - ii. Are necessary for the operational needs of activities in support of the Heritage Coast.
- and
- b) Are consistent with the Beachy Head to Selsey Bill Shoreline Management Plan, or its replacement;
- c) Conserve and enhance coastal access to/from the coast and along the coastline; and
- d) Cause no adverse impact on any designated MCZ and should ensure their conservation and, where possible, enhancement.

4.22. Some Local Plans have also recognised the importance of maintaining a balance between appropriate tourism activity and the environmental quality of Heritage Coasts. **Box 7** provides an example from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020, where the Heritage Coast is covered alongside the wider AONB designation.

Box 7. Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020. Policy SCLP6.3: Tourism Development within the AONB and Heritage Coast

Applicants are encouraged to engage with local communities and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Unit in evolving development proposals, with the aim of delivering development that takes an active role in the management of the local area.

Tourism development in the AONB, or its setting and Heritage Coast will be supported where it:

- a) Enhances the long term sustainability of the area;
- b) Is of a scale and extent that does not have a significant adverse impact on the primary purpose of the AONB designation;
- c) Is well related to existing settlements and / or supporting facilities;
- d) Avoids, prevents or mitigates for adverse impacts on the natural environment;
- e) Supports the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB and its setting;
- f) Is of the highest design standards and where appropriate reuses existing buildings;
- g) Promotes innovative, contemporary design in appropriate locations;
- h) Minimises light pollution from artificial light sources and ensures the retention of dark skies;
- i) Avoids locations sensitive to the exposed nature of the AONB and Heritage Coast; and
- j) Demonstrates sustainable aspects of the development during construction and throughout the life of the development. Renewable energy provision is strongly encouraged.

The spatial remit of local planning authorities extends to Mean Low Water, meaning development in offshore waters of Heritage Coasts is not covered by local planning (see below for Marine Planning). The

Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, which covers the South Devon Heritage Coast, is interesting because it includes a commitment to seek to integrate the Local Plan with the Marine Planning process (Box 8).

Box 8. Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. Paragraph 3.60 on integration of terrestrial and marine planning.

Given its coastal character, the LPAs will work with the Marine Management Organisation to implement the requirement under the national Marine Policy Statement to integrate marine planning and terrestrial planning in particular to support the development and delivery of the Inshore and Offshore Marine Plans for the South West and for the South. The LPAs will also work across boundaries with the MMO to ensure the delivery of the objectives of the South Devon Heritage Coast which includes areas of terrestrial coast and coastal waters out to 2km. The objectives of the South Devon Heritage Coast are set out in the South Devon AONB Management Plan.

- 4.23. Since most Heritage Coasts lie within designated landscapes, there are relatively few examples of recent planning cases that have relied solely on NPPF paragraph 178. One such case is on Flamborough Headland Heritage Coast where planning permission to extend an existing caravan park was refused on the grounds of its impacts on the Heritage Coast definition, based on Local Plan policies and the NPPF (Box 9).

Box 9. Summary of planning case in Flamborough Headland Heritage Coast (East Riding Council ref. 20/04073/STPLF). This case followed a sequence of applications starting in 1975 for the creation and development of a site for static and touring caravans on Flamborough Headland, some of which had been refused and some approved. The latest application, submitted in December 2020 was for a change of use to extend the existing caravan site and create a new area for caravan storage (partly retrospective). Objections were received from the Parish Council on the basis that more static caravans would erode the special character of Flamborough village and Natural England objected on the basis that the proposal would amount to major development of the Heritage Coast contrary to the NPPF and Local Plan policy, and also raising concerns about impacts on nearby European sites (although these concerns were secondary). Planning permission was refused in December 2020, citing Local Plan Policies ENV1 and ENV2 (the latter explicitly requiring proposals to protect and enhance important landscape areas that include Heritage Coasts) and also referencing the NPPF (then paragraph 173, now paragraph 178) concerning Heritage Coasts.

The special character of Heritage Coasts

- 4.24. The requirement to assess planning policy and decisions against the special character of Heritage Coasts is therefore a recent one, although the term ‘special character’ can be interpreted as a restatement of the “scenic quality and features of special significance and interest” for which they were originally defined. NPPF paragraph 178 does not state who should describe this special character or how this should be done. Nor is it clear whether compatibility with the special character of each Heritage Coast is intended to be a formal test, although it has been interpreted as such by Natural England in its role as a statutory consultee. Discussion with staff leading work in Heritage Coasts did not identify that any Local Planning Authorities had undertaken additional work to describe the ‘special character’ following the 2018 revision of the NPPF. Examples of ‘special character’ descriptions appear to have other origins such as Landscape Character Assessments, where the Heritage Coast coincides with a character area.
- 4.25. This study has reviewed examples of Local Plan policies, Heritage Coast Management Plans and other documents where statements of special character might expect to be found. There is considerable variation between Heritage Coasts. It might be expected that Heritage Coast Management Plans would be a good source. However, as noted above, most of these are out of date and even among those that are still accessible (for instance the Sussex Heritage Coast Strategy and Action Plan 2016-20) there is often not a clear statement of their special character.
- 4.26. Where Heritage Coasts are covered by designated landscapes, stakeholders tended to point to definitions of character in their statutory management plan (for instance the ‘special qualities’ described

in National Park Plans). This is the case for some management plans (for instance the local Statements of Significance in the Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2016-21 provide good statements of ‘special character’ – **Box 10** contains examples). However, in others, descriptions of special qualities covering the whole designated landscape are not fine-grained enough to highlight the importance of the Heritage Coasts, nor do they cover their marine elements and any terrestrial areas that lie outside the designated landscape.

Box 10. Parts of the Statement of Significance for the Pentire Point to Widemouth coastline from the Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2016-21) – a good example of a statement of ‘special character’. “The coastline throughout this section is craggy with dramatic contorted cliffs and folded slates, shales and volcanic rocks with some sandstone to the north, there are also some interesting coastal features such as rocky stacks, arches, headlands, caves and blowholes interspersed with rocky coves and a few sandy beaches such as at Trebarwith Strand and Crackington Haven. The valleys extend well inland, creating a secluded landscape with small farming hamlets. The microclimate of the sheltered valleys is in sharp contrast to the open farmland exposed to the strong sea winds on the coastal plateau where there is limited tree growth. Land use tends to be mainly limited to arable and pasture inland with coastal heathland dominating the cliffs. The sheltered and relatively inaccessible coves of this section are particularly important safe habitat for Cornwall’s globally significant population of grey seals. This section of the AONB contains some important historical features, such as the unaltered and still farmed medieval open field ‘stitchmeal’ system of Forrabury Stiches near Boscastle. Tintagel and Bossiney form large areas of settlement which have grown from small medieval communities to industrial villages supporting the surrounding slate quarries and have now evolved to support the ever increasing tourism trade. However, the surrounding land still tends to support small agricultural hamlets linked by narrow lanes and high hedges with a medieval pattern of enclosure. There is a noticeable lack of tree cover due to the exposure to coastal winds in this section. Land use is mainly agricultural grazing in small to medium sized fields of medieval origin although modern farming practice has resulted in some larger fields being created as can be seen on land behind Port Quin. Coastal heathland is a significant component of this area with rough and scrubby land leading inwards from the coast”.

- 4.27. The evidence suggests that statements of special character are most effective where they identify the features or qualities present in the Heritage Coast that justify its definition (i.e. that relate to its exceptionally fine scenic quality, undeveloped nature and/or features of special significance and interest – see **Table 2**). This information can then be used in planning decisions or conditions to prevent or mitigate harm to this special character. **Box 11** gives an example of a description of the special character of the Lundy Heritage Coast which would meet this test.

Box 11. The Distinctive Characteristics of Lundy (selected examples) from Devon Landscape Character Assessment (Devon County Council 2018). Another good example of statements of ‘special character’.

- A flat-topped island formed primarily of Tertiary granite, with Devonian slates revealed along the south-east peninsula; intrusions by vertical dykes reveal the island’s volcanic past.
- Northern half of plateau characterised by unenclosed heathland and acid grassland; in-bye farmland in the centre and south of the island enclosed within grey granite stone walls forming square fields.
- Cliff-top heath and maritime grasslands, supporting unique flora and fauna – including the endemic Lundy cabbage – plus colonies of grey seals and sea birds, including puffins.
- High concentrations of archaeological and historic sites from the prehistoric period to the 19th century, giving a very strong time-depth.
- Village clustered at the sheltered south-east corner of the island; unifying grey granite vernacular also used in other prominent buildings); white-rendered manor house is a distinctive feature.
- New jetty and access road snaking along the south-east peninsula linking landing bay with village; remainder of island crossed by one rough track, lined by distinctive granite boulders in its southern stretches.
- Extensive and varied seascapes, including long views to the South Wales and North Devon coasts; in clear conditions there are views to Woolacombe Down, Baggy Point and Saunton Down, with the lighthouse at Hartland Point forming a distinctive feature on the horizon.

Other ways in which environmental quality in Heritage Coasts is recognised in planning

- 4.28. As noted in Chapter 3 (para 3.21 *et sequ.*), Heritage Coasts have high densities of designated sites and these have their own levels of planning protection. One of the staff leading work in a Heritage Coast remarked that the Habitat Regulations Assessment for European Sites nature conservation sites has provided a stronger lever for influencing planning policy in their Heritage Coast than paragraph 178 of the NPPF.

Public access and enjoyment

- 4.29. Paragraph 174 states that: *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate”*.
- 4.30. This reference to access and enjoyment of the coast also has particular relevance to the England Coast Path project. While not conferring specific protection through the planning system, this element of the NPPF is likely to be reflected in any new Heritage Coast agreements made with participating local authorities.

Marine Planning by the Marine Management Authority

- 4.31. The UK’s Marine Planning system was established in 2012 (para. 2.13) and covers licensable activities (such as construction, laying of cables, dumping and dredging) in, over or under the sea up to Mean High Water and the Normal Tidal Limit in estuaries and rivers. Decisions by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) are guided by six inshore and five offshore Marine Plans covering English waters.
- 4.32. The Marine Policy Statement (2011) that governs marine planning is somewhat ambiguous in the protection it gives to Heritage Coasts. Paragraph 2.6.5.4 states *“For any development proposed within or relatively close to nationally designated areas the marine plan authority should have regard to the specific statutory purposes of the designated areas. The design of a development should be taken into account as an aid to mitigation”*. The footnote to this paragraph includes Heritage Coasts, with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, as examples of designated landscapes. However Heritage Coasts do not have ‘statutory purposes’.
- 4.33. The inshore Marine Plans identify and describe Heritage Coasts (there is significant variation between plans in the detail provided – the South West inshore Plan providing the most detail) and the MMO takes account of the contextual information in Marine Plans in its licencing decisions. It is not known if the presence of a Heritage Coast has had a material effect in any specific marine licencing decisions.

“There is potential for tidal power schemes to impact our Heritage Coast either directly or indirectly in the future. Even if outside the Heritage Coast the impacts could be significant - could 'buffer zones' protect the natural beauty of their sea setting?”

National infrastructure planning overseen by the Planning Inspectorate

- 4.34. The Planning Act 2008 introduced a new system for determining applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). NSIPs are not limited to terrestrial areas and include, for example, offshore windfarm projects. Decisions are taken by the Planning Inspectorate subject to National Policy Statements (NPS), each of which covers a different type of development. For instance, NPS EN-1 provides the overarching policy for energy projects, NPS EN-3 covers renewable energy infrastructure and EN-4 covers gas and oil infrastructure.
- 4.35. Heritage Coasts are not recognised by the National Policy Statements but the designated landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks) are. Paragraph 5.9.14 of EN-1 states *“Outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly valued locally and protected by local designation. Where a local development document in England or a local development plan in*

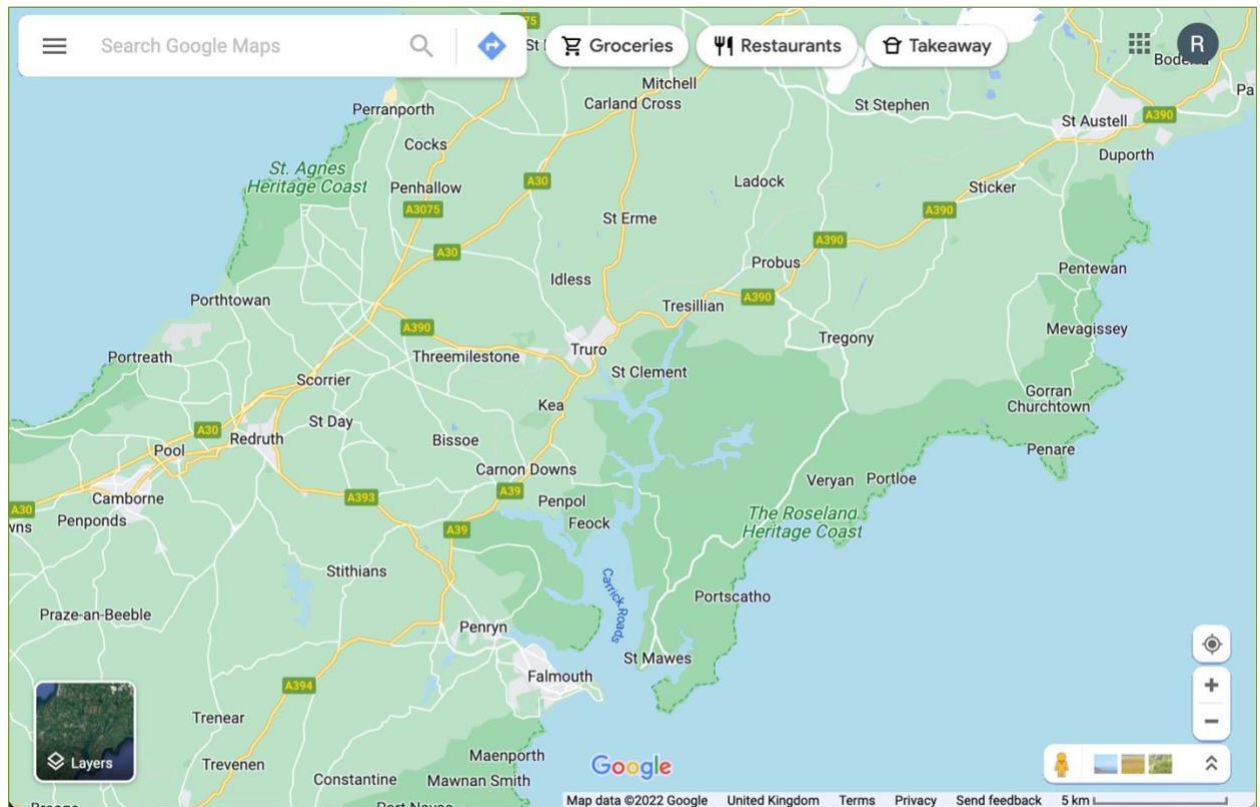
Wales has policies based on landscape character assessment, these should be paid particular attention. However, local landscape designations should not be used in themselves to refuse consent, as this may unduly restrict acceptable development”. Looking back to the decades of the 1990s and 2000s, Government and the Countryside Commission / Countryside Agency were clear that Heritage Coasts should be considered as part of the family of England’s finest landscapes along with the landscape designations. The wording of EN-1 is, like the omission of Heritage Coasts from the Landscapes Review, an example of how this recognition appears to have diminished in the last decade and more, resulting in their reduced prominence within current and recent policy.

- 4.36. There is clearly scope for future revisions of the NPS’s to adopt a similar approach to the NPPF to ensure that NSIPs are compatible with the special character of Heritage Coasts. However, despite the current lack of protection, Natural England staff who co-ordinate their organisation’s statutory consultee responses to NSIPs report that there are examples of marine NSIPs where the presence of a Heritage Coast has influenced the projects development. For instance, in the Navitas Bay Offshore Windfarm, the landscape receptors identified in the Examining Authority Recommendation Report included a number of Heritage Coasts, including the Isle of Wight’s Tennyson Down, and a set of design principle were agreed between the applicant and Natural England to minimise the projects impacts on the affected protected landscapes and Heritage Coasts. In the Hornsea 4 Offshore Windfarm, the visual intrusion of the electricity booster station was considered to have a significant negative impact on the character of the Flamborough Headland Heritage Coast, one of the Heritage Coasts that is not within a designated landscape, and mitigating measures were adopted to reduce this impact.

Status, recognition and place making

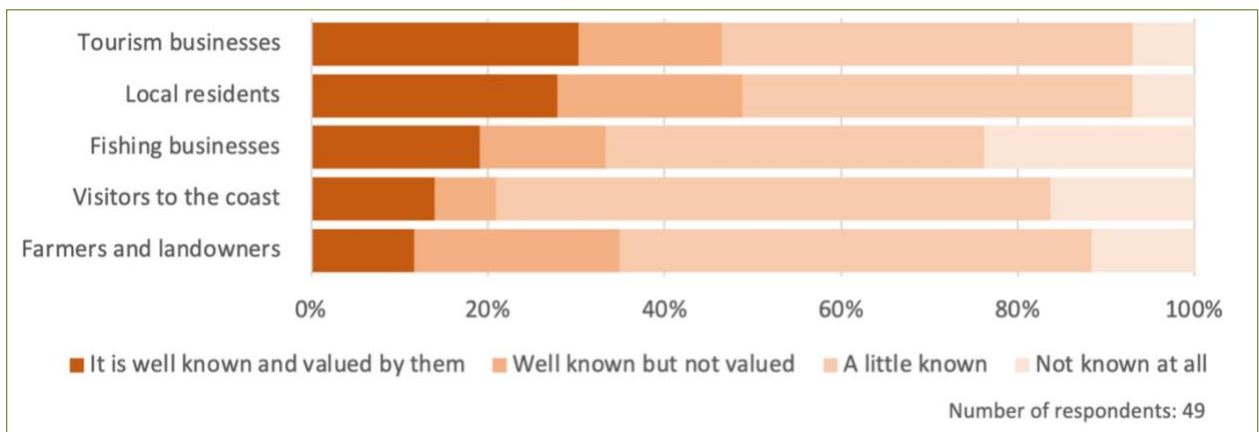
- 4.37. As noted earlier (paras. 2.9, 2.11), the status of scenic and other environmental quality that the Heritage Coast definition provides has been a key motivation for local authorities. Evidence collected during this review demonstrates that the Heritage Coast label continues to be highly regarded.
- 4.38. Internet search of the term ‘Heritage Coast’ England produces nearly 300,000 results, many of which point to tourism sites extolling the virtues of coastal experiences. In some areas of England such as the South West peninsula, Google Maps labels Heritage Coasts, while shading the area, but not labelling, the designated landscapes (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Google Maps’ labelling of Heritage Coasts in Cornwall



- 4.39. The online surveys undertaken by this study suggest that there are moderately high levels of recognition of their Heritage Coast by tourism businesses and local residents (Figure 12 – note these are the perceptions of stakeholders, not direct evidence of recognition levels). In view of the lack of national funding and low profile compared to designated landscape, this continuing recognition and support for the Heritage Coast definition is perhaps surprising. Several contributors to the study suggested that the term ‘Heritage Coast’ retains traction because it is succinct and easy to understand (meeting the ‘Ronseal test’ of “saying exactly what it does on the tin”). They contrasted this with the greater levels of public uncertainty about what Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks do. As noted earlier (para. 2.11), the ‘place making’ cache of Heritage Coasts, recognising their environmental quality as places to live and visit and offering economic opportunities, appears to be one of the motivations for local authorities to seek extensions or new definitions of Heritage Coasts.

Figure 12. Survey respondents' views on recognition of Heritage Coasts amongst different groups



4.40. A majority of survey respondents felt the profile and understanding around Heritage Coasts needed raising amongst the public and businesses. 80% felt the status and value of Heritage Coasts should be better known and understood, distinguishing them from other parts of England’s coast. But 10% felt the profile and needs of all of England’s coasts should be promoted equally, with no distinction given to Heritage Coasts. At the workshops undertaken in the study, some people also questioned the value of a national brand with low levels of visitor recognition compared to the much higher profile of local identities. It is perhaps that there is very little use of Heritage Coasts as a brand in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly which are both areas with strong coastal tourism offers.

4.41. Representatives of some of the designated landscapes were ambiguous about the value of the Heritage Coast brand to their area. They were concerned that promoting the Heritage Coasts risked diluting the profile of their statutory landscape designation. Some pointed out that overlapping designations competing with each other for public attention risks sowing confusion. Examples given were the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, which is heavily promoted along the Dorset and East Devon Coasts and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve which has a high profile on the North Devon Coast.

“We feel it is unclear what the Heritage Coast brings to our area that the AONB couldn’t do. At one point Heritage Coasts were embedded in planning and came with funding. This role is now largely taken by the AONB. It is hard to see the benefit of the Heritage Coast over AONB given the Landscapes Review and the resulting changes to AONBs.”

4.42. A notable exception to this antipathy from designated landscapes is in the Kent Downs AONB which is embracing recent international recognition of their Heritage Coast. In January 2022 the Lonely Planet guide included Kent’s Heritage Coast in its annual list of the global best regions to visit (Box 12). Their description of this area was not limited to the two relatively small defined areas of Heritage Coast in Kent but it is clear that they regarded the term ‘Heritage Coast’ as summing up the best of what this part of Kent had to offer visitors.

Box 12. Kent's Heritage Coast - Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2022. Global travel publishers Lonely Planet have placed Kent at number four on their list of the world’s best regions to visit - ‘Best in Travel 2022’. The list defines the top 10 hottest countries, cities, and regions to visit next year.

The area is the only UK destination to feature in their 2022 lists and is described as “Long stretches of beautiful, iconic white cliffs, the regeneration of its two main towns, historic Dover and creative Folkestone, and idyllic countryside bordering it”.

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/best-in-travel/regions>

- 4.43. There is also a much darker side to the notoriety that some Heritage Coasts have attracted, and one stands out. The Sussex Heritage Coasts is home to high chalk cliffs of the Seven Sisters and in particular Beachy Head. In the words of one of the respondents to the survey. *“Beachy Head on the Sussex Heritage Coast is a stunning asset that millions enjoy. However, overtime it has sadly developed a reputation as one of the most iconic locations used for suicide in England, as well as the world.”* As a result a considerable level of resource is channelled, by a range of partners, into developing and implementing suicide prevention strategies.

“In East Sussex we have worked with partners to develop suicide prevention plans for the area. This was informed by a multi-agency deep dive programme in 2019, that helped us understand the issues surrounding suicide at the location, which we called 'Rethinking our heritage coast'. All of this work is done under the radar of any publicity, to reduce the likelihood of reinforcing the location is used for suicide.”

International recognition of Heritage Coasts

- 4.44. In 2010, a challenge was made to the UK’s designated landscapes on their status as Category V protected areas in the IUCN classification (see **Box 13**). That challenge included Heritage Coasts, together with the designated landscapes of National Parks and AONBs and provided the opportunity for Heritage Coasts, on an individual basis, to confirm their international status at Category V protected areas. The IUCN report stated: *“Other types of designation which are not self-evidently protected Areas include national scenic areas Heritage Coasts Areas and regional parks. All should be examined on their merits in line with the guidance ... and if advanced as a protected area supported with a statement of compliance”*.

Box 13. The IUCN definition of Category C Protected Landscape/Seascape is “A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values”.

- 4.45. Responses to this challenge were made on behalf of the designated landscapes by their national associations but the situation of Heritage Coasts has been left unanswered.

National guidance and liaison

- 4.46. Responsibility for overseeing the Heritage Coast definition nationally lies with Natural England, on behalf of Defra. With no current formal Heritage Coast programme, the staff resource specifically dedicated to Heritage Coasts is now limited and reactive. The strategic overview and advice for Heritage Coasts sits with the national Landscape and Heritage Team with links to the national Sustainable Development Team. At the Area Team level, staff may not have Heritage Coasts formally identified in their portfolio, but are expected to support them through their local partnership working including that with designated landscapes, their development control casework, and other coastal and marine project work where this overlaps with Heritage Coasts.
- 4.47. The most recent policy circular on Heritage Coasts was issued by the Countryside Commission in 1992. Natural England has recently updated its own guidance on the process for defining or extending Heritage Coasts (**Box 1**, page 4) for its own internal use in conjunction for local authorities.
- 4.48. There is no equivalent of the National Association of AONBs or National Parks England to represent the collective interests of Heritage Coasts at a national level. The Europarc Atlantic Isles group was active on Heritage Coasts (for instance its Coastal and Marine Working group undertook a survey and workshop on Heritage Coasts in 2017) and the National Trust, with its large landownership in Heritage Coasts, has expressed interest in providing a national liaison role. However, discussion with staff leading work in Heritage Coasts during this review, revealed frustration at the lack of networking and sharing of information between Heritage Coasts.

Key findings from this chapter

- **Strategic partnerships and management plans:** Unlike the designated landscapes, formal partnerships involving a range of stakeholders were not a core feature of most Heritage Coasts when they were defined. Heritage Coasts originally developed their own Management Plans, but most have not maintained one since the early 2000s. The Durham, Sussex and Lundy Heritage Coasts are exceptions on both counts, currently having Heritage Coast Partnerships and a dedicated Management Plan (although the status of those in Sussex is under review).
- **Reliance on designated landscapes plans:** The overwhelming majority of Heritage Coasts, being in designated landscapes, are in principle covered by the remit of their AONB or NP Partnership and statutory Management Plan. However, in practice there is usually little evidence of these addressing the Heritage Coast to any significant extent, with the consequences that:
 - Heritage Coasts' marine areas are usually not covered;
 - the importance and needs of "the features of special significance and interest" for which Heritage Coasts were defined may be overlooked;
 - There is no, or insufficient, information on the practical interventions that are needed to deliver the national objectives of the Heritage Coast definition;
 - They do not have the benefit of an agreed strategy for engaging with stakeholders and attracting external funding; and
 - The terrestrial areas of those Heritage Coasts that are associated with designated landscapes but actually lie outside their boundaries are effectively 'orphaned'.
- **Protection in land use planning:** Heritage Coasts are recognised by paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which enhances previous Government planning guidance, and all Local Plans covering Heritage Coasts contain policies reflecting its requirements. A key element of NPPF paragraph 178 is the protection given to the 'special character' of Heritage Coasts but these are often either poorly defined or difficult to locate. In practice, for the large majority of Heritage Coasts that lie within designated landscapes, NPPF paragraphs 176 and 177 take precedence.
- **Protection in marine and national infrastructure planning:** The status of Heritage Coasts is somewhat ambiguous in the Marine Policy Statement that govern the licensing of marine activities and they gain no formal protection in the National Policy Statements that govern national infrastructure planning. However, in both there are case examples where the presence and special character of Heritage Coasts have been taken into account and given a level of protection.
- **Status, recognition and place-making:** The term "Heritage Coast" continues to have a high profile in marketing by coastal tourism businesses and moderately high levels of recognition by local people, perhaps because the term is succinct, and its meaning is clear. The place-making role of the Heritage Coast brand is a factor in a desire from some local authorities to extend or define new Heritage Coasts. However, contributors to this study highlighted the risk of confusion and dilution from overlapping place-branding, preferring to promote stronger local brands, including the statutory designated landscapes. The international status of Heritage Coasts as Category V Protected Landscapes/Seascapes is unclear and could be resolved.
- **National guidance and liaison:** There has been no national guidance on Heritage Coasts since 1992 and the definition has as low profile within Natural England, its sponsoring body, and within Defra. Unlike the designated landscapes, there is no organisation that champions the definition and the collection of places covered by it, and frustration was expressed by some of the people working in Heritage Coasts at the lack of networking and sharing of information between them.

5. Management activities in Heritage Coasts

- 5.1. This chapter considers how the national objectives of Heritage Coasts are being delivered on the ground. Each of the objectives is taken in turn and then the administration and funding of Heritage Coasts are described.

Delivery of Heritage Coast objectives

- 5.2. The review of national and local policy objectives in Chapter 2 (para. 2.13 *et sequ.*) concluded that the four national objectives of Heritage Coasts, redefined in 1992 and unchanged since then, remain highly relevant. Indeed all of the objectives are reflected in current national policy priorities and ongoing programmes of work, and the location of Heritage Coasts, as areas of high scenic and other environmental quality with specific socio-economic needs and opportunities, makes them a focus of activity for many of these policy programmes.
- 5.3. Responses to the online survey show that stakeholders consider conserving the natural environment and heritage as the overriding priorities (**Figure 13**) which is consistent with the primary purpose of National Parks and the core purpose of AONBs. Next in the survey responses came improving the health of inshore waters closely followed by enhancing public experience and understanding. Addressing the needs of agriculture forestry and fishing and those of local communities were lower priorities.

Figure 13. Survey responses on the prioritisation of Heritage Coast Objectives

Answers given to the question: From your experience of the issues facing the Heritage Coast, please indicate which of the following objectives you think are high, medium and low priorities for action?	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low priority
Conserving the natural environment and heritage	100%	0%	0%
Enhancing public experiences and understanding	60%	40%	0%
Improving the health of inshore waters	70%	30%	0%
Taking account of the needs of agriculture, forestry & fishing	30%	60%	10%
Taking account of the needs of local communities	40%	60%	0%

- 5.4. Chapter 4 showed that most Heritage Coasts do not have their own strategic plans to describe how their objectives will be met or to monitor delivery and outcomes. In Heritage Coasts that lie in designated landscapes, their statutory Management Plans have now taken over this role, with varying levels of reference to their Heritage Coasts. As already stated (para 4.10), these statutory Management Plans operate at a strategic level, seeking to co-ordinate and focus the activities of partners (particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty where resources available to the AONB Unit are small).
- 5.5. Another significant issue affecting the delivery of Heritage Coast objectives is the absence of a national Heritage Coast funding programme since 2005. As noted further below, other national funding has been used, and local authorities have used their own budgets to resource work, but there is no longer, as there was under the Countryside Agency's funding, an onus on local authorities to run specific Heritage Coasts programmes. Much of the beneficial activity that is described in this chapter, happens to take place in Heritage Coasts, as places of high environmental and social value and need. But, importantly, it is not necessarily done *because of or for* the Heritage Coast definition and its objectives *per se*.
- 5.6. Finally, the Heritage Coasts objectives apply to the local authorities that have adopted the definition who engage with a range of partners at a strategic and operational level through the partnerships (para. 4.3 *et sequ.*). There is no obligation on other national and regional bodies, including government agencies, statutory undertakers and utility companies to further the Heritage Coast objectives. As noted further

below, this has implications for activities that may lie outside the geographical or functional reach of local authorities.

- 5.7. Notwithstanding these issues there are many examples of positive activity taking place in Heritage Coasts that are addressing the four national objectives of the definition. In many of these, leadership for the work is provided by the local authorities that are responsible for the Heritage Coast definition, including, where appropriate, National Park Authorities or the local authority's AONB Unit. The term 'Heritage Coast body' is used as a collective shorthand to describe these organisations.

Objective 1. The conservation of natural beauty and cultural heritage

- 5.8. The first national objective of Heritage Coasts is "To conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral and marine flora and fauna, and their heritage features of architectural, historical and archaeological interest".
- 5.9. The high density of designated environmental and historic environmental sites means that national measures such as Countryside Stewardship Higher and Mid-Tier agreements tend to be focussed to significant areas in Heritage Coasts. The high levels of landownership by environmental NGOs such as the National Trust means that uptake of these agreements also tends to be high in Heritage Coasts, with these landowners adding their own resources and successfully acquiring other sources of external funding.
- 5.10. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has been used in many Heritage Coasts to protect and enhance biodiversity, landscape and the historic environment, usually with significant local community engagement. Examples include:

- The Catch My Drift project at the Northumberland Wildlife Trust's East Chevington Nature Reserve on the edge of the North Northumberland Heritage Coast.
- The Seascales project in the Durham Heritage Coast (**Box 14**).
- The Touching the Tide Landscape Partnership Scheme (2013-2016) led by the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB along the Suffolk Heritage Coast.
- The Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme led by the National Trust on the Kent Coast around Dover and Folkestone, including the South Foreland and Dover – Folkestone Heritage Coasts.
- The West Wight Landscape Partnership in the Isle of Wight, including the Tennyson Down and Hamstead Heritage Coasts.

Box 14. The Tyne to Tees, Shores and Seas – SeaScapes Partnership. This Heritage Lottery Funded project, led by the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership, focuses on the Magnesian Limestone seascape between the rivers Tyne and Tees. This seascape is rich in maritime, wartime and natural heritage; though much of this is out of sight. Through the 23 projects it will improve access to beaches, explore the shipwrecks and habitats beneath the waves, improve biological recording through citizen science, construct a coastal conservation centre, tackle marine litter and create opportunities for local people and visitors to enjoy being on and in the sea. The scheme aims to take a community-led approach from the beginning, engaging coastal communities and sea users throughout development and delivery.

- 5.11. Our coasts face specific challenges affecting their natural environment. The issue of sea level rise is considered below under Objective 4. Other issues include marine non-native invasive species, such as the Chinese mitten crab and slipper limpets both affecting the south and east coasts, and protecting sensitive habitats on offshore islands from pests.
- 5.12. There are examples of conservation projects in Heritage Coasts addressing these issues (such as rat eradication to protect ground nesting sea birds such as puffin from Lundy and the Isles of Scilly), but these are not exclusive to Heritage Coasts and there is no targeting of activity to Heritage Coasts *per se*.

- 5.13. Beach cleaning initiatives involving local community volunteers picking up litter from the coast were a staple activity in many Heritage Coasts when Countryside Agency funding enabled more direct coastal management work to take place. This still takes place in several Heritage Coasts including Durham, Purbeck and West Dorset and the Isles of Scilly (**Box 15**) but is not as widespread, and – with the exception of Durham – is not branded as a Heritage Coast activity, as it was in the period to 2005.
- 5.14. As already noted, the National Trust runs and participates in a range of schemes involving its coastal properties. Examples include the Dynamic Dunescapes Project, co-ordinated by Natural England and delivered with other partners such as Plantlife (two of the six English locations are in Heritage Coasts - North Devon and Purbeck), and the Studland Bay 3C's project to protect the fragile inshore seagrass habitat. The National Trust is taking a leading role in climate adaptation at the coast through its Shifting Shores policy, with practical experiences at areas such as Blakeney Fresh (North Norfolk Coast) and Birling Gap (Sussex Coast).
- 5.15. The National Agencies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England) have also been a source of funding for projects led by Heritage Coast bodies, such as the South Devon Coastal Heritage Project (**Box 16**).

Box 16. The South Devon Coastal Heritage Project. The South Devon AONB has secured funding from Historic England, Natural England and the South West Coast Path Association to interpret and protect Scheduled Monuments at two locations in the South Devon Heritage Coast – Bolt Head to Bolt Tail and the mouth of the Dart Estuary. The project will run for three years from 2021 in partnership with the National Trust, South West Coast Path Association, Devon County Council and Historic England.

Box 15. Beach cleaning activities on the Dorset Coast and Isles of Scilly.



- 5.16. Discussion with the designated landscape bodies that include Heritage Coasts revealed that much of their work on environmental land management in the last two years has been focussed on the Government's Agricultural Transition, the replacement of EU Common Agricultural Policy schemes with England's new Environmental Land Management schemes. This work, which has included supporting 'Test and Trial' development research for Defra, running an Advocacy Programme promoting existing schemes and operating the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant scheme, has taken up the capacity of staff who liaise with their farming and landowning community.

Objective 2. Enjoyment and understanding by the public

- 5.17. This objective is “To facilitate and enhance their enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with, the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features”. It seeks two somewhat different outcomes, although in practice these are often connected at a project level. The first of these relates to physical access and recreational activity and the second to knowledge, understanding and appreciation of coastal beauty, nature and heritage. The wording of the national objective (**Table 1**) makes clear that the former must be done in a way that is compatible with the latter, but they can nevertheless involve different project outputs.

Promoting physical access and recreation

- 5.18. The England Coast Path is a major national initiative that will complete the National Trail around the coast and create a coastal margin for public access (para. 3.30). Organisations supporting the existing National Trails around the coast have active programmes enhancing access – and also public understanding and appreciation - particularly the South West Coast Path Association. Although these include activities in Heritage Coasts, they are not undertaken as or prompted as Heritage Coast activities.
- 5.19. There are a few coastal routes in Heritage Coasts that are actively promoted as ‘Heritage Coast Walks’, including Durham, Suffolk and Sussex. An annual ‘Suffolk Heritage Coast Run’ takes place as a marathon, until 2021 organised by the Saxmundham and District Rotary Club (**Box 17**).
- 5.20. Water-based activities at the coast have grown in popularity in recent decades, including the use of motorised craft such as jet skis and speedboats and organised activities such as coastering. In several Heritage Coasts, action has been taken to reduce conflict between intrusive recreation and nature. Examples are the work of the South Devon AONB, through its Estuaries Officer, to encourage responsible use of the Salcombe-Kingsbridge and other estuaries by recreational boat users, and the initiative led by the National Trust at Studland Bay in the Purbeck Heritage Coast to reduce damage to the seagrass beds by mooring yachts.

Box 17. The Suffolk Heritage Coast run



Enhancing public understanding and appreciation

- 5.21. Public awareness of coastal nature has also grown in recent decades, with programmes such as the long running documentary series ‘Coast’ and campaigns to reduce marine plastic pollution almost certainly contributing to this.
- 5.22. Nature-based educational activities with visitors and local communities take place in many Heritage Coasts. Examples include the RSPB’s boat trips to the Farne Islands (North Northumberland Heritage Coast), the Cornwall Wildlife Trust’s Seaquest initiative (a citizen science project to collect data on whales, dolphins and other marine wildlife) and archaeologically-themed activities on the Isles of Scilly (**Box 18**).
- 5.23. More broadly, many of the Heritage Coasts include highly popular visitor destinations where there is active visitor

Box 18. Archaeology-themed activities

on the Isles of Scilly. Scilly Walks was established in 2000 and offers guided walks, boat trips, slideshows and short break holidays to introduce you to the archaeology and history of the Isles of Scilly, a group of islands 28 miles off Land's End, Cornwall, England. It is run by Katharine Sawyer, a qualified archaeologist who has lived on St Mary's, the largest of the islands, since 1999.

management by the local authority and landowners. Examples include Lindisfarne on the Northumberland Coast, Flamborough Headland, Aldeburgh on the Suffolk Coast, the White Cliffs Country Park at South Foreland, Beachy Head on the Sussex Coast and Lands End on the Penwith Heritage Coast.

- 5.24. When Heritage Coasts received national funding from the Countryside Agency, community-based environmental management and interpretation projects took place in almost all Heritage Coasts¹⁸.

Public engagement, interpretation and educational activities, including citizen science projects, have been part of many if not all of the HLF-funded schemes described above, and in other locally resourced projects such as the Coastal Creatures project in North Devon (**Box 19**). However, cuts in local authority budgets and significant reductions in their coast and countryside management teams mean that these activities are not as regular as they once were.

- 5.25. The opportunities provided for improving public health and wellbeing in high quality environments is attracting growing attention from policy makers. It might be expected that projects addressing this with funding from health sector budgets would be found in many Heritage Coasts, but this does not seem to be the case. Something of an exception is the #ActiveCoast project being developed by North East Coast Active Partnerships (a collection of partnerships promoting sport and active recreation from the Scottish Borders to the Wash). This project is promoting opportunities for access provision and physical exercise along the region's coastline, addressing poor health and low activity levels in coastal communities¹⁹. While it includes active participation by the Durham Heritage Coast team, there is little evidence of promotion in other Heritage Coasts as part of Heritage Coast programmes in the region.

Box 19. The Coastal Creatures Project (2016-2018) was funded by the HLF and run by the North Devon Coast AONB. It worked with local communities and visitors to celebrate and raise understanding of diverse marine and coastal natural heritage on four beaches (Northam Burrows, Croyde, Lee Bay and Combe Martin). Nearly 12,000 people took part in 247 activities including rockpool rambles, mud dipping, intertidal surveys, beach cleans, BioBlitzes and local festivals and events.

"Some local groups actively participate in heritage conservation projects. For example, the North Devon Archaeological Society and the Devon Archaeological Society, in North and East Devon, alongside the AONBs own community volunteer groups. National Trust volunteers regularly help with conservation work on the Devon Heritage Coasts. Many local history societies organise events celebrating their coastal heritage and sense of place."

¹⁸ See the Heritage Coast Review published in 2006.

¹⁹ NECAP (2020). *England's Physically Inactive Coast: Turning The Tide On Physical Inactivity Rates*. Report by North East Coast Active Partnerships. December 2020. <https://www.activelincolnshire.com/uploads/Englands-Physically-Inactive-Coast.pdf>

Objective 3. Maintaining the environmental health of inshore waters

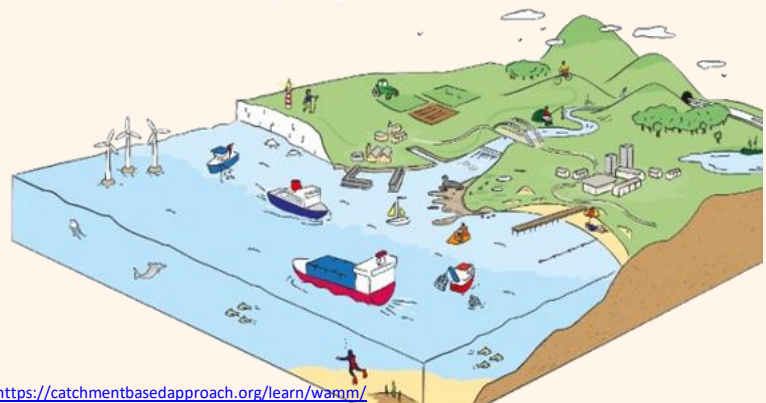
- 5.26. The third objective of Heritage Coasts is “To maintain and improve (where necessary) the environmental health of inshore waters affecting Heritage Coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures”.
- 5.27. At the start of this Chapter, it was noted that the Heritage Coast objectives apply to local authorities who seek to deliver them through their partnerships, but that this can be difficult outside the areas of their geographical influence. This is especially the case for this Heritage Coast objective. The 2006 Review concluded that there was least evidence of this objective being delivered through the Heritage Coast definition, and this still applies.
- 5.28. National responsibility for monitoring and enforcement of the health of inshore waters rests with the Environment Agency. It is not an issue within the direct remit of Heritage Coast bodies, although they are members of the coastal partnerships that work with the Environment Agency.
- 5.29. Coastal water quality in Heritage Coasts is, on average, somewhat better than for other areas of coast, but as **Figure 6** showed, nearly two thirds of Heritage Coasts still experience an overall water quality (assessed in the relation to the Water Framework Directive) that is classified as moderate or worse. Not surprisingly, the cause of poor water quality in Heritage Coasts as with the rest of the coastline, is almost entirely a terrestrial issue through discharges directly into the sea or through rivers and estuaries. Diffuse pollution, where the precise source of the poor water quality cannot be identified, is a key issue for inland catchments nationally and this is being addressed by the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) and its network of partnerships.

“Less priority is given to Objective 3 as maritime responsibility lies with other bodies.”

“Maintaining the health of inshore waters is not a priority for the authorities I represent”

- 5.30. A lack of integration nationally between the CaBA Partnerships and the Coastal Partnerships has been noted and this is being addressed through the Wholescape Approach to Marine Management (WAMM) project (**Box 20**). Although the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership has been well represented at WAMM events, other Heritage Coasts are not specifically represented and participating in the Coastal Partnerships Network.

Box 20. WAMM graphic showing its ‘wholescape’ catchment approach



<https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/wamm/>

- 5.31. There are examples of actions by Heritage Coast bodies have led work on the health of their inshore waters. Para. 5.12 noted ongoing work in some Heritage Coasts on litter clearance on beaches which has an influence on water quality. More directly, the South Devon AONB’s Estuaries Officer works with boat owners to prevent pollution from fuel and cleaning fluids into the estuaries. Exmoor recently became becoming the first National Park in the UK to be wholly awarded 'Plastic Free Community' status by the marine conservation charity Surfers Against Sewage, in recognition of the work by businesses and communities to reduce the impact of single-use plastic on the environment.

“The AONB designation stops at high tide level, so any marine or littoral activity ceased when the AONB Team was established and the Heritage Coast Service were incorporated into that team. We have supported beach cleans from our community grant scheme”.

Objective 4. Taking account of the economic and social needs of communities

- 5.32. The final objective of Heritage Coasts is “To take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of the economic and social needs of the small communities on these coasts, by promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features”. The wording of this objectives shares much with the duty placed on National Park Authorities (Environment Act 1995) and the subsidiary aim or purpose of AONBs (Countryside Commission Policy Statement, 1991). Promoting sustainable social and economic development is a familiar activity for all local authorities.
- 5.33. Much of the work to deliver the first two objectives that involves landowners, businesses, local communities, recreational users and the wider public contributes to this fourth objective. Examples include the Farming In Protected Landscapes programme (para. 5.16) to prepare farming businesses for the transition of the new Environmental Land Management schemes, the community beach clean projects (para. 5.13), organised recreational activities (para. 5.19 and community engagement and citizen science (para. 5.24).
- 5.34. Outside of these activities it becomes more difficult to attribute sustainable social and economic development work to the Heritage Coast definition. Indeed given the caveat in this objective “which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features”, it would be unreasonable to expect Heritage Coasts to be prominent in the work of bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnerships that are co-ordinating work in this area through growth hubs and innovation funds. This probably accounts for the lower priority given by survey respondents to this objective (**Figure 13** and para. 5.3).
- 5.35. Nevertheless, several participants to this study see potential in drawing stronger connections between the Heritage Coast definition and three particular social and economic issues. These are:
- The health and well-being agenda, where ‘finest coasts’ have a particularly strong role to play as spirit-lifting landscapes with fine views and cultural associations and an abundance of nature and as areas that the public associate with leisure and relaxation. As the Chief Medical Officers 2021 report showed (**Box 3**), many coastal communities are areas of particular need with poor health outcomes and services.
 - The Government’s levelling up agenda, where, as this study (**Figure 9** and para. 3.39) and other research (**Boxes 2 and 3**) has shown, many coastal communities are falling behind due to high levels of multiple deprivation or a lack of affordable housing for local workers.
 - Adaptation to climate change, where many coastal communities face the acute challenges of rising sea levels (coastal squeeze) and increasing coastal erosion from storms.
- 5.36. It is not for this review to say whether these issues should be attached more closely to the Heritage Coast definition since they also apply to other coastal communities. However, Heritage Coast’s place-making attributes, highlighting the social and economic opportunities that can arise from their high scenic qualities and natural capital, could give them a valuable role in public policy to promote sustainable and economic growth generally.

“The impact of Climate Change and the Health and Wellbeing of the public need to be given recognition in the objectives”.

“Coastal Erosion is a significant issue on parts of the Yorkshire coast which will impact heritage areas if not managed correctly”.

Heritage Coasts as agents of practical management action

- 5.37. The previous chapter showed that most Heritage Coasts have not engaged in the levels of strategic partnership working and local strategic objective setting that is now considered the norm in designated landscapes. Instead, during their nationally-funded heyday of the 1980s and 90s their emphasis was on

practical environmental and recreational management, involving staffing working with landowners, businesses and communities at a grassroots level. In this they were typical of most environmental programmes in that period where local authorities were engaged in coast and countryside management through directly employed teams (now much diminished).

- 5.38. Many contributors to this study felt that the Heritage Coast definition continues to offer great potential for co-ordinated practical management work with landowners, other businesses and communities. Several people commented that the high levels of landownership by charitable bodies, particularly the National Trust, and the high concentration of natural capital and leisure activity at the coast, means that investment in environmental management in Heritage Coasts delivers a high return in public benefits.
- 5.39. Cuts to local authority budgets have reduce the level of activity, but there were suggestions that any new national resources that may become available (for instance in response to the Landscape Review or the Agricultural Transition) should be directed to on-the-ground delivery in Heritage Coasts.

Administration, staffing and governance

Administration

- 5.40. The definition of Heritage Coasts is by agreement between local authorities and Natural England and it is therefore local authorities that have responsibility for administering the definition. The high level of colocation of Heritage Coasts in designated landscapes means that functional responsibility for furthering the objectives of the definitions rests with AONB Units and National Park Authorities. In this review, it was usually the AONB lead officers and, in National Parks, a senior member of the conservation team, who responded to our requests for information and took part in workshops.
- 5.41. It should be noted that there is no formal recognition of the administration of Heritage Coasts by designated landscape bodies. As a result, their obligations to administer or resource their Heritage Coast definition have never been clear. The 'core functions' that set out what AONB units were expected to do as a condition of their Countryside Agency funding, and the Key Performance Indicators since agreed with Defra, do not refer to the Heritage Coast definition. Similarly, there is nothing in Defra's funding settlements with National Park Authorities, the Eight Point Plan for National Parks (2016-2020) or the Governments English National Parks and the Broads Circular (2010) referring to Heritage Coasts.
- 5.42. It is worth reiterating that some Heritage Coasts include significant 'orphaned' areas that lie outside their designated landscape (para. 3.8). The point was made by staff in the North Devon Coast and South Devon AONBs that they are aware of such orphaned areas outside their AONBs (Braunton Marsh and Great Field in the former and Burgh Island in the latter) but have limited authority to act in these areas.
- 5.43. Outside of designated landscapes, responsibility usually rests within the core local authority structure. Only in the Durham Heritage Coast is there now a dedicated Heritage Coast Officer role. In Flamborough Headland and Spurn, information was provided to this study by a coastal projects team managed hosted by Scarborough District Council and by the projects officer for the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership but it appears that, at a functional level, responsibility for the definition rests in the planning department of East Riding Council. Again, in St Bees Head, responsibility rests with the planning department. The other non-designated landscape, Lundy is something of a special case due to its ownership by the National Trust which leases management of the Island to the Landmark Trust.
- 5.44. Local government structures in many parts of England have been going through a period of reorganisation with the introduction of unitary or combined authority status being established in many areas. When this happens, there is no process in place for Natural England to refresh and rejuvenate the agreement with the local authority over their Heritage Coast definition, with the risk that responsibility for delivering this gets lost in the new authority structure. This appears to have occurred in Cornwall

where the previous levels of support for Heritage Coast by many of the Districts is not currently replicated at a county-wide level. With Cumbria now moving to unitary authority status, it will be important that the commitment being shown by Copeland Borough Council for the St Bees Head Heritage Coast (including moves to extend the definition) is not lost

“The other point I wanted to reinforce is around securing local participation for governance and for delivery. ... Encouraging local objective development and adoption will assist with local “buy in” and continuing interest.”

Staffing

- 5.45. The 2006 Review found that only the Durham Heritage Coast retained a dedicated Heritage Coast team (at that time part-funded locally by the Countryside Agency) and other Heritage Coasts were covered by designated landscape bodies or countryside management teams in local authorities. This contrasts with 1993 (reported in the 2006 Review) when most Heritage Coasts had or shared a Heritage Coast Officer. The situation found in 2006 largely remains the case today. Durham County Council is currently renewing its commitment with the replacement of the retiring Heritage Coast Officer, but no other Heritage Coast has a dedicated member of staff.
- 5.46. Contributors to the study, reported that the pressures on local authority budgets and on central Government funding to designated landscapes over the last decade, have reduced the numbers of staff involved in coast and countryside management activities. Most AONB Units have never included countryside management teams (unless funded on short term projects). In many local authorities, countryside management activities are now contracted out and limited to their own land. Pressures on National Park Authority budgets have tended to see a reduction in their National Park ranger or warden teams. This means that in most areas of England, there is now less public funding of staff involved in on-the-ground environmental management. Instead, the emphasis has been on agri-environment agreements with landowners and the use of external project funding such as that from the Heritage Lottery Fund. However, the environmental charities have become increasingly proactive in acquiring and managing land, including in Heritage Coasts (para. 3.12). In many Heritage Coasts, particularly along the narrow coastal strip, the National Trust’s property managers and rangers now provide the largest single resource for delivering Heritage Coast objectives on the ground.
- 5.47. This study heard from several people, most now retired, who had been Heritage Coast Officers in the past. Most had spent their careers working on coastal management, several still involved in a voluntary capacity in coastal activities such as National Trails. The EUROPARC Atlantic Isles working group on Coastal and Marine issues has drawn together much of the coastal expertise in current and retired staff in protected landscapes. Although it has been less active during the Covid pandemic, it is hoped it will continue to provide a focus for recording and exchanging knowledge on coastal management.

Governance

- 5.48. There has never been a recommended structure for local governance or oversight of Heritage Coasts. The role of partnerships in guiding work in Heritage Coasts has already been covered in the previous chapter, showing that Heritage Coasts are, *de facto*, normally covered by designated landscape partnerships or other groups with a wider remit. This has a number of disadvantages for Heritage Coasts which are similar to those that are found in relation to the reliance on designated landscape management plans (para. 4.15). Namely, that there is often no representation from marine bodies such as the Marine Nature Partnerships or Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities and that the local importance of Heritage Coast is frequently overlooked, reducing the opportunities for engagement and objective setting with local landowners, businesses, communities and other stakeholders.

Funding

- 5.49. It has not been possible in this Review to isolate spending by Heritage Coast bodies on their Heritage Coasts. This is because in almost all Heritage Coasts there is no dedicated Heritage Coast team or programme of activity. Work that contributes to achieving the national Heritage Coast objectives usually takes place across larger areas and is not recorded against the Heritage Coast definition. As noted earlier in this chapter, Heritage Coasts benefit from fixed-term project funding from external sources to deliver many of the national Heritage Coast objectives, and many major landowners are involved in positive management. However, this spending is taking place in Heritage Coasts (as areas of particular value and need), rather than for Heritage Coasts (as a landscape with a defined national status and objectives).
- 5.50. This was already largely the case when the 2006 Review looked at Heritage Coast funding. It reported that *“By 1998 Countryside Agency funding had moved substantially towards the funding of AONBs rather than Heritage Coasts. Because of the broader remit of AONBs it is difficult to estimate how much of this funding was allocated to delivering Heritage Coast purposes. Information collected centrally by the Countryside Agency from their regional offices showed that, in 1998, most of the AONBs with Heritage Coasts estimated that around half of their core funding was used for delivering Heritage Coast purposes. In 2006 core funding of AONBs had risen but, arguably, the proportion of their budgets allocated to delivering Heritage Coast purposes had fallen (reflecting the priority attached to drawing up and delivering the statutory management plans and the relatively low priority allocated to coast-specific objectives in these plans)”*.

Key findings from this chapter

- **An emphasis on practical management activities:** During the first three decades of the Heritage Coast definition, the focus of activity was on practical environmental and recreational management, involving staffing working to manage and enhance the coastline at a grassroots level. Many contributors to this study feel that the Heritage Coast definition continues to offer great potential for co-ordinated practical management work with landowners, and engagement with local residents, businesses and visitors.
- **Delivering the Heritage Coast objectives:** As noted earlier, all four of the national objectives of the Heritage Coast definition remain highly relevant – indeed even more relevant than during the period of the last review in 2006. There is good evidence of activity to deliver the Heritage Coast objectives in all Heritage Coasts but, with few exceptions, this is not being done as part of specific Heritage Coast programmes. This activity is taking place in Heritage Coasts (as areas of particular value and need), rather than for Heritage Coasts (as a landscape with a defined national status and objectives).
- **Natural beauty, public enjoyment and health of inshore waters:** Delivery of the first Heritage Coast objective (natural beauty and heritage) is regarded as the priority by most stakeholders, is similar to the core AONB statutory objective, and there are many examples of beneficial management projects taking place, most of them using time-limited external funding. The second objectives (public enjoyment and understanding) is also strongly supported and activities can be split between access/recreation and understanding/appreciation. AONBs do not have a similar statutory objective unless they are managed through conservation boards, but National Parks do. Delivery of the third objective (health of inshore waters) remains the weakest, being largely outside the remit of both local authorities and designated landscape bodies.
- **The economic and social needs of communities:** Much of the work to deliver the first two objectives contributes to this fourth objective. Contributors to this review also see potential for Heritage Coasts' high scenic qualities and natural capital to be used to promote sustainable and economic growth more widely, particularly in relation to the Government's health and wellbeing and levelling-up agendas and to adaptation to climate change.
- **Responsibility for the Heritage Coast definition:** Since Heritage Coasts are defined through agreement between Natural England and local authorities, responsibility for administering the Heritage Coast definition rests with the local authority. In designated landscapes this means the AONB Units and National Park Authorities. However, there is no formal recognition or requirement in the national funding arrangements for AONBs and National Parks for them to carry out this function. Where local authority structures change, such as through Unitary Authority Status, there is not process for refreshing the new authority's commitment to their Heritage Coast.

6. The Heritage Coast Journey – where next?

- 6.1. This review has described the fortunes of Heritage Coasts over the last 50 years. This can be summarised as a journey of pioneering advancement and latterly – for many – of stagnation. This chapter reviews the journey and reflects upon lessons learnt, concluding with a brief discussion around the options for the future of the Heritage Coast definition.
- 6.2. The journey can be divided into two parts: the period up to the early 2000s when Heritage Coasts were being defined and established and were well-resourced by the Countryside Commission/Countryside Agency and then the period since then and up to the present-day when their profile and funding has declined.

The early days

- 6.3. When the first Heritage Coasts were being defined in the 1970s, public policy towards the environment was simpler than it is today. The environmental sector in the UK was in its infancy. With the exception of National Parks, environmental activity in most of the countryside was localised and focused in specific areas such as Nature Reserves and Country Parks. At this time, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were little more than lines on maps to be used by planning departments to shape policy and guide development control.

“I was employed as a Heritage Coast Officer from 1984 to 1990 during which I helped define the coastal area to be included and deliver work programs that ‘cut through red tape’ working with the landowners and community to achieve HC Objectives.”
- 6.4. The focus for environmental activity in the countryside tended to be split between the new discipline of countryside and recreation management and the more traditional activities of nature conservation. The Countryside Commission, later to be the Countryside Agency, oversaw countryside management and The Nature Conservancy Council, later to become English Nature, was the government agency that oversaw nature conservation.
- 6.5. The Countryside Commission’s role in defining with local authorities the Heritage Coast and funding the Heritage Coast programme meant that the focus of activity in the early years in Heritage Coasts was on countryside management and public enjoyment (through which nature conservation activities and, to a lesser extent, cultural heritage management, took place to deliver the first Heritage Coast objective).
- 6.6. With sufficient and stable funding, defined programmes of work and a relatively blank canvas, countryside management thrived in Heritage Coasts. Project officers and rangers became expert at managing the competing demands for recreation, conservation and access. Effective projects, programmes and techniques were developed in Heritage Coasts to balance needs of visitors with environmental protection. A Heritage Coast Forum was established to facilitate the sharing of experience and best practice. As a result, Heritage Coasts flourished and much good work was undertaken.

Recent times

- 6.7. During the late 1980s and 90s, the AONB designation began to attract more attention from government and local government. Countryside management projects were established in a number of areas and they copied the learning from Heritage Coasts. One of the earliest AONB countryside management projects evolved out of work in the Sussex Heritage Coast, leading to the South Downs Conservation Project (**Box 20**) which was focused on the Sussex AONB and progressively moved inland to include parts of the AONB a long way from the coast.

- 6.8. In 1990s, the National Association for AONBs was established to champion the AONB designation. It acted as a nucleus for the AONB movement, helping to raise its profile which culminated in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 where AONBs received the same status in planning policy as National Parks. This resulted in shifting the focus towards AONB management and away from management in areas such as Heritage Coast.
- 6.9. At the same time there was a movement away from direct countryside management and nature conservation towards high level strategic planning and greater reliance on delivery through programmes administered by other partners.
- 6.10. AONBs partnerships were formed and charged with preparing statutory management plans on a 5 yearly cycle. AONB teams were small in relation to the areas they covered. For example, initially the North Wessex Downs only had two staff covering 1,700 km². The countryside management approach developed in Heritage Coasts would not work for AONBs. Instead, strategic management planning and delivery through partners became the modus operandi.
- 6.11. New resources were needed to deliver AONB management, but there were no new sources of funding. Resources that had traditionally been used to support Heritage Coast work was now channelled into AONBs. With the loss of resources and the rise in importance of AONB Management, activity and the profile of Heritage Coasts began to wane.
- 6.12. The decline is highlighted in earlier chapters but it is worth reiterating one positive outcome. The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 resurrected the fortunes of Heritage Coast in at least planning terms. In the NPPF, there was a policy specifically targeted at Heritage Coast (para. 4.18).

Box 20. Sussex Heritage Coast to South Downs

National Park. A direct line can be drawn between the successful creation of the Sussex Heritage Coast in 1973 (the first to be defined in England) and the establishment of the South Downs National Park in 2010. During the 1980s, the Sussex Heritage Coast had spawned the East Sussex Conservation Project which led to a sister project working on the Sussex Downs AONB in West Sussex. A public campaign in the 1990s for a National Park to protect downland owned by Brighton and Hove Borough Council led to the development of an experimental conservation board with a significant countryside management function, based on the experience of the earlier Conservation Projects. Ultimately the conservation board was dissolved and in 2010 a National Park was designated for the whole of the Sussex Downs and East Hampshire AONBs.

“The AONB designation stops at high tide level, so any marine or littoral activity ceased when the AONB Team was established and the Heritage Coast Service were incorporated into that team. We have supported beach cleans from our community grant scheme.”

Options for the future of Heritage Coasts

- 6.13. Broadly speaking three scenarios can be considered for the future of Heritage Coasts: 1. Doing nothing different (**Retain**), 2. Proactively maintaining the definition with a renewed focus (**Revive**) and 3. Forging a new role for Heritage Coasts (**Reimagine**).
- 6.14. Addressing the **Retain** scenario first, it is clear that if there is no deviation from the status quo, the Heritage Coasts that are in decline or are being overshadowed by a designated landscape will continue to become less influential and increasingly irrelevant. There is no particular driver that will encourage most designated landscape bodies to change management of and promote their Heritage Coasts above their own brand. In AONBs, their limited funding means they do not have the option to engage directly in countryside and recreation management and they may have no appetite to add Heritage Coasts to their branding. Again, with limited funding, National Parks are likely to deliver diminishing ranger services with no separate Heritage Coast identity.
- 6.15. There are a few Heritage Coasts that can stand alone and are supported by local authorities. Durham Heritage Coast is the primary example, where the legacy of the remarkable restoration of the industrially

degraded coastal landscape that took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s continues to garner strong local authority support for the Heritage Coast definition. The Retain option in these areas may be sustainable, as long as there continues to be local political support.

- 6.16. The **Revive** scenario would involve taking a more energised and nationally supported approach to resurrect and reprioritise the national objectives of the definition, through an updated understanding of the special character and needs of Heritage Coasts within the context of their designated landscapes. This would require reinvigorating existing structures and mechanisms to achieve more focused and coordinated management of the coastal environment. In the designated landscapes that cover the large majority of Heritage Coasts, National Park Authorities and AONB Partnerships would need to take a more active responsibility for the definition, supported by national guidance on how this should be done through their statutory Management Plans, partnership working and their planning roles.
- 6.17. Outside the designated landscapes, there is already wide variation in how the Heritage Coast definition is enacted, from the high commitment for proactive management demonstrated by Durham County Council, to the more reactive reliance on planning controls in Flamborough Head and Spurn. The current interest from local authorities to extend (St Bees Head) or define new (Lincolnshire) Heritage Coasts are signs that the definition retains a cache and value. However, local authority structures in some areas are changing and to revive their defined Heritage Coasts, national support is needed to help local authorities understand their commitment, both in their planning function and in proactive projects with landowners, businesses and communities.
- 6.18. **Re-imagining** Heritage Coasts is the most ambitious scenario. A wide range of views have been expressed to this review about the continuing relevance and importance of the Heritage Coast definition. Overall, the organisations and people that engage with Heritage Coasts consider them to be both relevant and important in today's world. Invariably, their ability to progress the Heritage Coast objectives has been limited by resources and competing priorities. They have pointed out that environmental policy has developed considerably since Heritage Coasts were established, particularly in the marine sphere and in areas such as climate change and public health and well-being. Elements of Heritage Coasts objectives have been given new urgency such as nature recovery, improved water quality, and people's connection to, and access to high quality natural environments.
- 6.19. With Government proposing to give AONBs and National Parks a new 'unified mission' and stronger role in nature recovery²⁰, now might be the right time to re-imagine or re-purpose the Heritage Coast definition. As has been reported, the Landscape Review and Government's responses to date have been silent on Heritage Coasts, while recognising the need for new ways of supporting high quality landscape close to where people live and visit (para. 3.35 *et sequ.*). The 25 Year Environment Plan has recognised the importance of the terrestrial-maritime interface and the levelling up agenda is focussing attention on the needs of many coastal communities, enhanced place-making, and the opportunities for 'green' economic development. These are all issue where the Heritage Coast definition offers new opportunities and a chance for a re-purposed role which builds on its existing criteria and objectives.
- 6.20. During times of rapid change, it is also important to be cautious. If Heritage Coasts are reaffirmed as part of England's family of National Landscapes (as recommended in the following chapter), and then their role and potential is re-imagined, how would they be better aligned and differentiated with AONBs and National Parks? Would they adopt the same strategic emphasis on five-year management plans and formalised partnership structures, and risk losing the flexible and voluntary approach that has served them well in the past? And could they rely on existing pots and sources of funding or would new resources be necessary?

²⁰ Defra (2022). Landscapes review: Government response. January 2022.

7. Overall conclusions and recommendations

- 7.1. The main findings of the review have already been summarised at the ends of Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 and are not repeated here. The overall conclusion on the state of Heritage Coasts can be summarised as follows:

Heritage Coasts continue to be coastlines of exceptionally fine scenic quality, rich in nature and cultural heritage, and highly valued as places to live, work and visit. The objectives of Heritage Coasts, last updated 30 years ago, remain highly relevant to new national policy priorities. This is particularly the case at the terrestrial-marine interface where Heritage Coasts are unique as a spatial definition.

Notwithstanding the continuing relevance of its national objectives, the Heritage Coast definition is no longer referenced in national policy reviews and statements, such as the Landscapes Review. An exception to this is the planning protection provided to Heritage Coasts through paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Activities that deliver most of the national objectives of Heritage Coasts continue to take place, supported by a wide range of partners. But the definition's omission from recent national landscape policy means that these can be ad hoc and lack the benefit of a stated shared ambition coordinated and channelled through the recognition of the nationally important and valued coast. There is no current national monitoring of Heritage Coasts, leading to the risk that actions may be less joined up and outcomes less effective than they could be.

Planning policy appears to be effective in maintaining their undeveloped nature on land, but there is ambiguity over their status in marine and national infrastructure planning.

In most areas, the Heritage Coast definition itself is becoming lost and is receiving little dedicated attention within the designated landscapes in which most Heritage Coasts occur. A past strength of Heritage Coasts as a mechanism for engaging in practical environmental and recreational management with business and communities appears to have fallen out of favour, in part due to reduced funding.

Despite these shortcomings, the definition offers significant new capacity, reflecting national policy priorities, as a voluntary place-based status that complements designated landscapes. Its key potential is in recognising coastal landscapes of high scenic and other environmental value which in turn provide opportunities for sustainable economic development, the growth of social capital within communities, and enhancement of personal health and wellbeing.

Unless there is reconfirmation by Government of the role of the Heritage Coast definition, and new national guidance on how this role can be delivered by local authorities alongside the designated landscapes, it is likely that the Heritage Coast definition will continue to decline, diminishing the valuable opportunities it offers to the nation's stretches of finest coastline.

Recommendations

- 7.2. Fourteen recommendations to address these conclusions are put forward from this Review. It should be noted that these are independent recommendations arising from the consultants' analysis of evidence and engagement with stakeholders and they are not agreed actions.

The current status of Heritage Coasts

- A. Defra should reaffirm the status of Heritage Coasts in the family of national protected landscapes, including their importance as defined areas of England's finest stretches of undeveloped coast and their distinctive role in delivering national policy priorities in these areas.
- B. There should be liaison between Natural England and local planning authorities, following local authority reorganisation or the creation of designated landscapes, to ensure Heritage Coast agreements and commitments are reaffirmed.
- C. The alignment between the boundaries of Heritage Coasts and designated landscape boundaries should be given a priority in Natural England's designations review, ensuring that designation boundaries encompass all parts of the Heritage Coast they are associated with.
- D. Defra, through Natural England, should consider whether the status of Heritage Coasts as internationally recognised IUCN Category V protected landscapes/ seascapes should be reconfirmed and, if so, should support the relevant local authorities in achieving this.

The role of Heritage Coasts in delivering national policy priorities

- E. The role of Heritage Coasts in the delivery of the national Nature Recovery Network (and for example the 30by30 target) should be clarified, including the ways in which Heritage Coasts should be recognised and supported through Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- F. Priority should be given in Environmental Land Management schemes, particularly the Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery schemes, for projects in Heritage Coasts to protect and enhance their exceptional scenic quality and features of special significance and interest.

Planning protection of Heritage Coasts

- G. In view of the ambiguous references to Heritage Coasts in the Marine Policy Statement (2011) and the National Policy Statements, the status of Heritage Coast as a material consideration in Marine and National Infrastructure Planning should be clarified so that it matches that in the NPPF.
- H. Technical guidance to local authorities should be provided on how and where the 'special character' of Heritage Coasts should be described so that it can be used effectively in planning decisions, including on a non-statutory basis in NSIPs through Natural England's advice.

The Delivery of Heritage Coast objectives

- I. Guidance should be prepared for designated landscape bodies on how Heritage Coast should be recognised, and their objectives included in their statutory Management Plans, and in the preparation of specific Heritage Coast documentation where appropriate.
- J. Guidance should be provided to local authorities and designated landscape bodies on how they can use their influence to support Heritage Coast objectives outside their LA / landscape designation boundaries – including and particularly offshore.

- K. Guidance to national agencies, statutory partnerships (e.g. Regional Flood and Coastal Authorities) and utility companies should be provided on how they can support the delivery, with local authorities, of Heritage Coast objectives. This is particularly relevant to the third objective (health of inshore waters), which relies on their involvement.
- L. Consideration should be given to how any new national funding that becomes available to local authorities, AONB teams and National Parks can be directed to 'on-the-ground' delivery of Heritage Coast objectives, recognising their broad environmental, economic, social and health benefits and their high value and profile with local communities and visitors.
- M. Progress towards achieving Heritage Coast objectives should be included in existing national monitoring frameworks, for instance as spatial subsets of the indicators in the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes and the People and Nature Survey.
- N. Natural England should consider how a regular programme of networking amongst organisations and lead staff working in Heritage Coasts could be developed.

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Appendix I. Research Framework

Heritage Coast Objectives: Heritage coasts are defined, by agreement between the local authority and Natural England, with the following national objectives established in 1992 (bold text has been added here for clarity):

1. To conserve, protect and enhance **the natural beauty** of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral and marine **flora and fauna**, and their **heritage features** of architectural, historical and archaeological interest.
2. To facilitate and enhance their **enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public** by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with, the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features.
3. To maintain and improve (where necessary) the **environmental health of inshore waters** affecting Heritage Coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures.
4. To take account of **the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of the economic and social needs of the small communities** on these coasts, by promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features.

(Further background on Heritage Coasts is available [here](#).) The following research questions will be investigated by this review.

A. Policy context and drivers

How are current national policy priorities affecting delivery of each of the four Heritage Coast (HC) objectives? (e.g. 25 YEP, Marine Management Plans, LNR Strategies, 30x30, Net Zero Strategy, Climate Change National Adaptation Plan and River Basin Management Plans).

Are the pressures and challenges facing HCs broadly the same as those in 2006? Consider against the four HC objectives.

- Do HCs have needs and opportunities (environmental and socio-economic) that are distinctive or different from other coastal areas?
- How relevant are the HC definition and objectives in the context of these needs and opportunities?

Who are the key stakeholder organisations with interest and influence over HCs (terrestrial, intertidal and marine areas). How have these stakeholders changed in the last 15 years and how has this affected the delivery of HC objectives.

- Who owns land in the Heritage Coast? (Public authorities, NGOs and public landowners). How does this ownership influence land management objectives and outcomes?
- Is there evidence of significant change in land use patterns occurring (in the recent past and currently). Is this consistent with changes taking place along undefined coastal areas and more widely, or is change in the HCs different?

How have changes in statutory designations and the way they are delivered affected the achievement of Heritage Coast objectives? To include N2K designations, water quality zones, AONBs and NPs and Marine Conservation Zones.

B. Strategic planning and decision-making

How have changes in national planning policy and guidance affected the way that local strategic planning documents address HC objectives?

- How have new national land use planning policy documents, guidance and initiatives affected the delivery of HC objectives (e.g. NPPF and PPGs, Marine Planning Statement and CCMA's)?
- How has the establishment of the MMO and the adoption of Marine Plans influenced the HC definition and achievement of HC objectives?
- To what extent has the HC definition influenced the work of Regional Flood and Coastal Defence Committees?
- Has national guidance on Heritage Coasts (for instance from Defra/NE) kept up with key developments in policy and pressures on HCs (including forthcoming legislation and policy changes)?
- How might updated national guidance (including in the NPPF and on the preparation of AONB & NP Management Plans) strengthen the delivery of HC objectives?

How do public sector strategic plans (AONB and NP Management Plans, Local Plans and Marine Inshore Plans) recognise and support HC objectives?

- Do local authorities (AONBs, NPs and LAs) prepare dedicated HC management plans (including as sections within wider plans). If not do they have policies, actions or targets that are specifically related to their HC and HC objectives?
- To what extent are a Heritage Coast's 'special characteristics' identified, published, and used in relation to a) land use planning, b) management planning and c) communication strategies.

- Are there examples of management plan actions that have had a significant impact in achieving HC objectives (for instance affecting management of specific areas of coast)?
- Are there best practice examples of Local Plan policies that are particularly relevant to achieving each of the four HC objectives?
- To what extent is HC objective #4 discernible in local economic policies and plans?
- Are there any discernible trends in the way that local strategic plans have addressed HC objectives in the last 15 years?

How are the HC definition and objectives reflected in governance and decision-making structures in local authorities that contain HCs (AONB JACs, NPAs or LAs)?

- Where does responsibility for delivering HC objectives lie at LA departmental level?
- How have changes in local authority structures in the last 15 years affected the way that HC objectives are addressed?
- Are there best practice recommendations on effective decision-making structures in local authorities regarding HC objectives?
- Is advice and guidance from NE in relation to HC objectives (especially #1 and #2) sought, obtained and adopted?
- Does advice and guidance from EA contribute to delivery of HC objective #3?
- Similarly, do HE and the MMO provide advice and guidance at a local level on HC objectives?

C. Recognition and advocacy

How is the Heritage Coast definition regarded by communities and businesses? How aware are they of the definition and do they value it?

- Are there examples of local businesses and communities proactively engaging to deliver HC objectives, such as through land or visitor management?
- To what extent is it a recognised 'brand' used to promote the area?
- Are other national or local brands used to promote the high quality natural environment and recreational opportunities in HCs?
- Do stakeholders feel that the HC brand will remain relevant. Are there recommendations on how this could be developed locally or nationally?

D. Projects and programmes of activity

What locally-run projects or programmes have taken place in each HC that have had a direct effect on HC objectives over the last 15 years? Projects to be identified against the four HC objectives.

- Which of these projects or programmes have had a specific coastal focus? Are there others (i.e. with wider geographical focus) that have also delivered HC objectives?
- Which national programmes or schemes have been used to fund or support these local projects and are some of them new (since 2006)?
- To what extent has the availability and mechanisms of funding and the objectives of funding bodies influenced local projects addressing each of the HC objectives?
- Are there best practice examples of projects that show how HC objectives can be delivered effectively?
- What recommendations are there on running effective locally-delivered projects in HCs?

How have national delivery programmes influenced the achievement of HC objectives in each HC?

- How have England's agri-environment schemes (ES & CS) affected the delivery of HC objective #1?
- How is creation of the England Coast Path National Trail affecting the delivery of HC objective #2?
- How has promotional activity and resources provided by national tourism bodies affected delivery of HC objectives #2 and 4?
- How has Defra's national and regional programme of flood defence investment affected HCs? Is there evidence that the HC definition has influenced investment?
- Are there examples of actions by water companies or the EA that have specifically assisted delivery of HC objectives #1 and 3?
- Have regulatory or promotional activities by the Sea Fish Industry Authorities specifically assisted or impacted on HC objective #4?
- How has the growth of the renewable energy sector affected delivery of HC objectives?

E. Resourcing

What level of staffing resource is directed towards achieving HC objectives in each HC from a) responsible local authorities (AONBs, NPs and LAs), b) other public bodies (i.e. ALBs) and c) NGOs.

- Is there a minimum level of staffing in the responsible LAs needed to achieve HC objectives?
- What are the key roles and qualifications required for LA staff involved in delivering HC objectives?
- Are there examples of best practice in the way LA staff are deployed (particularly coordination between public, private and third sector bodies)?
- What expertise and other resources are available from national agencies to support LA deliver of HC objectives and how are these made use of in practice?

Appendix II. People who attended the five workshops held during the Review

Name of contact	Organisation	Position	Heritage Coast
FIRST WORKSHOP. 2pm, Wednesday 16th February			
Iain Robson	Northumberland Coast AONB	AONB Manager	North Northumberland
Heather Davison-Smith	Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership	Partnership Officer	Flamborough Headland
Tom Munro	Dorset AONB	AONB Manager	Purbeck + West Dorset
Chris Woodruff	East Devon AONB	AONB Partnership Manager	East Devon
Roger English	South Devon AONB	AONB Manager	South Devon
Julian Branscombe	Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust	CEO	Isles of Scilly
Julie Layzell	Exmoor NPA	Future Landscapes Officer	Exmoor
Ruth Adams	Southwest Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme	Programme Manager	Regional interest
Sarah Manning	Natural England	Contract manager	National interest
Robert Deane	Rural Focus	Contractor	
Richard Clarke	Rural Focus (associate)	Contractor	
SECOND WORKSHOP. 10.30am, Tuesday 22nd February			
Richard Grogan	Isles of Wight AONB	AONB Manager	Tennyson + Hamstead
Dave Edgecombe	North Devon AONB	Projects Officer	Hartland (Devon) + North Devon
Nicola Radford	Coastal Communities Alliance	Senior Commissioning Officer	Lincolnshire
Nick Collinson	National Trust	General Manager Properites Suffolk and Essex coasts	Suffolk & Essex Coasts
Kevin House	Environment Agency	FCRM Senior Advisor - Coastal & Habitat Creation Programme	National
Nick Brodin	Berwickshire and Northumberland Marine Nature Partnership	Partnership Officer	North Northumberland
Simon Amstutz	Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB	AONB Manager	Suffolk
Richard Haynes	Dover District Council	Up on the Downs LPS Manager	South Foreland + Dover-Folkestone
Phil Belden	Sussex Wildlife Trust		Sussex
Sarah Manning	Natural England	Contract manager	National interest
Robert Deane	Rural Focus	Contractor	
Richard Clarke	Rural Focus (associate)	Contractor	
THIRD WORKSHOP. 2pm, Thursday 24th February			
Niall Benson	Durham County Council	Principal Heritage Coast Officer	Durham
Briony Fox	North York Moors NPA	Director of Conservation	North Yorkshire & Cleveland
Leanne Parr	Copeland District Council	Principal Strategic Planner	St Bees Head

Mayuri Patel	Defra	Landscapes, Access and People	National interest
Sarah Manning	Natural England	Contract manager	National interest
Robert Deane	Rural Focus	Contractor	
Richard Clarke	Rural Focus (associate)	Contractor	

FOURTH WORKSHOP. 10.30am, Wednesday 2nd March

Peter Chamberlain	Devon County Council	Environment Manager	Regional interest
Helen Jay	National Trust	Lead adviser, coasts	National interest
Chris Lingard	Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust	Countryside Manager	South Devon
Rachel Thirlwall	Marine Management Organisation	Heritage Policy Lead	National interest
Sarah Manning	Natural England	Contract manager	National interest
Robert Deane	Rural Focus	Contractor	
Peter Allen	Scarborough Borough Council	Coastal Projects Officer	Flamborough Headland
Steve Gilbert	Devon Maritime Forum	Partnership Officer	Regional interest
Julian Gray	South West Coast Path Association	Director	Regional interest
Nick Johannsen	Kent Downs AONB	AONB Director	South Foreland + Dover-Folkestone
Imogen Wood	National Trust	Heritage and Climate Consultant	National interest
Richard Clarke	Rural Focus (associate)	Contractor	

FIFTH (SUMMATIVE) WORKSHOP. 10.00am, Thursday 5th May

Niall Benson	Durham County Council	Heritage Coast Officer (retired)	Durham
Nick Collinson	National Trust / Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB	General Manager Properites Suffolk and Essex coasts	Regional interest
Roger English	South Devon AONB	AONB Manager	South Devon
Anthony Firth	Historic England	Head of Marine Heritage Strategy	National interest
Helen Jay	National Trust	Lead adviser, coasts	National interest
Nick Johannsen	Kent Downs AONB	AONB Director	South Foreland + Dover-Folkestone
Mel Nicholls	Marine Management Organisation	Senior Marine Planner	National interest
Stuart Pasley	Natural England	North West Team Delivery Leader: Landscape	National interest
Jon Taylor	Defra	Head of Future Landscapes Strategy and Governance	National interest
Rachel Thirlwall	Marine Management Organisation	Heritage Policy Lead	National interest
Sarah Manning	Natural England	Contract manager	National interest
Richard Clarke	Rural Focus (associate)	Contractor	
Robert Deane	Rural Focus	Contractor	
Nick James	LUC	Contractors on related project	
Erin Hynes	LUC		

Appendix III. Spatial data on Heritage Coasts

Heritage Coast	Area above Mean Low Water (MLW) (ha)	Area above Mean High Water (MHW) (ha)	Area outside designated landscapes (ha)	Detailed length along MHW (Km)	Smoothed length along MHW (km)
Dover-Folkestone	397	317	0.5	9.3	8.7
Durham	603	512	511.8	14.1	13.8
East Devon	3,537	3,367	21.2	40.6	28.4
Exmoor	6,395	5,940	-	59.3	45.2
Flamborough Headland	3,453	3,308	3,307.6	22.4	18.9
Godrevy - Portreath	1,144	1,091	-	14.6	11.5
Gribbin Head - Polperro	2,644	2,540	46.9	49.3	24.5
Hamstead	1,812	1,513	92.6	58.2	10.7
Hartland (Cornwall)	2,609	2,455	-	14.9	10.4
Hartland (Devon)	5,320	4,825	3.4	44.7	36.5
Isles of Scilly	2,312	1,629	-	117.9	98.2
Lundy	437	422	421.7	20.6	13.7
North Devon	8,827	8,124	811.3	60.5	36.9
North Norfolk	9,219	6,078	-	690.0	45.1
North Northumberland	13,417	9,991	341.7	178.9	88.8
North Yorkshire & Cleveland	6,770	5,986	1,386.4	64.6	58.0
Pentire Point - Widemouth	11,067	10,757	151.8	76.9	50.4
Penwith	15,747	15,562	3,280.7	90.6	55.0
Purbeck	15,539	14,512	9.1	205.4	82.6
Rame Head	342	312	27.6	12.5	7.8
South Devon	12,889	12,327	317.9	167.4	81.6
South Foreland	639	557	6.6	8.1	7.6
Spurn	1,751	302	301.9	18.7	18.3
St Agnes	1,193	1,151	566.8	15.1	10.7
St Bees Head	615	573	573.4	6.0	5.8
Suffolk	11,468	10,292	-	262.8	56.3
Sussex	2,288	2,116	2.0	17.1	12.6
Tennyson	2,541	2,395	1.8	36.1	34.5
The Lizard	5,141	5,027	2.6	45.1	26.9
The Roseland	5,608	5,327	6.3	85.6	45.1
Trevose Head	123	110	-	5.4	3.4
West Dorset	5,353	5,177	407.9	73.6	39.9
Total	161,200	144,594	12,601.6	2586.0	1087.9

The data on this page were generated using GIS by the authors of this Review. It used the shapefiles for the Heritage Coast boundaries provided by Natural England, projected using the OSGB Coordinate Reference System (EPSG27700). The GIS polylines for Mean High Water and Mean Lower Water were those provided in the Ordnance Survey's Boundary Line dataset. For the smoothed lengths in column 6, a simplified Mean High Water polyline with nodes at 50m and excluding estuaries and islands was created.

Appendix IV. Population data and Heritage Coasts

Heritage Coast	In the Heritage Coast	In the 2km buffer around the Heritage Coast	Within a 30 minute drive	Within a 60 minute drive
Dover-Folkestone	1,283	42,042	376,352	305,015
Durham	1,294	73,833	1,268,207	2,278,992
East Devon	2,522	34,586	135,821	796,787
Exmoor	2,481	14,436	14,670	25,025
Flamborough Headland	3,344	14,930	132,705	312,787
Godrevy - Portreath	638	9,710	210,475	81,080
Gribbin Head - Polperro	4,231	15,519	77,535	7,033
Hamstead	838	5,453	123,939	143,691
Hartland (Cornwall)	568	4,326	21,434	76,824
Hartland (Devon)	1,410	13,183	67,472	36,291
Isles of Scilly	2,203	2,203	1,421	1,570
Lundy	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
North Devon	8,479	30,580	44,458	24,462
North Norfolk	1,505	7,065	66,803	681,473
North Northumberland	6,296	32,438	27,031	366,973
North Yorkshire & Cleveland	5,608	68,034	24,912	57,189
Pentire Point - Widemouth	5,480	10,570	45,402	438,029
Penwith	10,241	24,208	16,233	3,599
Purbeck	6,295	59,164	147,976	229,080
Rame Head	141	1,967	38,273	254,737
South Devon	8,674	50,006	64,177	69,197
South Foreland	1,173	14,738	106,465	1,275,957
Spurn	106	498	12,395	340,565
St Agnes	2,594	10,018	32,217	2,583
St Bees Head	272	5,718	83,257	174,078
Suffolk	7,376	29,903	44,371	513,665
Sussex	1,357	39,699	273,571	1,323,420
Tennyson	1,792	17,628	6,844	4,343
The Lizard	4,463	18,576	12,447	2,085
The Roseland	3,764	7,811	16,472	4,755
Trevoise Head	39	390	13,754	95,634
West Dorset	5,351	55,607	111,750	524,007
Total	101,821	714,840	3,618,837	10,450,928
Percent of England total	0.2%	1.3%	6.8%	19.7%

The data on this page were generated using GIS by the authors of this Review. It used the shapefiles for the Heritage Coast boundaries provided by Natural England, projected using the OSGB Coordinate Reference System (EPSG27700). The population data refers to the 2011 Census using the ONS Census Output Area (COAs) small area geographies. The COAs were clipped to the Heritage Coast boundaries, with the population in COAs spanning the boundary adjusted relative to the areas inside and out. Columns four and five gather data from the COAs that lie within drive times (isochrones) of the Heritage Coasts, using the TravelTime Platform GIS plugin.

Appendix V. Land cover in Heritage Coasts

Heritage Coast	Arable crops	Horticulture	Fallow	Grassland	Woodland	Heath/Dune	Urban	Water
Dover-Folkestone	22%	6%	10%	7%	35%	3%	10%	6%
Durham	45%	11%	7%	20%	10%	1%	2%	5%
East Devon	44%	2%	2%	13%	32%	2%	4%	0%
Exmoor	17%	2%	4%	36%	28%	12%	2%	0%
Flamborough Headland	66%	9%	3%	15%	3%	0%	4%	0%
Godrevy - Portreath	41%	8%	4%	21%	20%	3%	2%	0%
Gribbin Head - Polperro	35%	2%	3%	34%	20%	1%	4%	0%
Hamstead	35%	3%	5%	24%	30%	0%	2%	0%
Hartland (Cornwall)	25%	1%	3%	45%	19%	4%	2%	0%
Hartland (Devon)	28%	1%	3%	40%	22%	5%	2%	0%
Isles of Scilly	31%	20%	19%	12%	9%	1%	2%	6%
Lundy	26%	7%	3%	31%	1%	28%	4%	1%
North Devon	29%	3%	6%	39%	17%	2%	3%	1%
North Norfolk	34%	7%	15%	35%	3%	2%	1%	4%
North Northumberland	48%	3%	2%	32%	4%	0%	2%	9%
North Yorkshire & Cleveland	47%	3%	2%	34%	9%	4%	1%	0%
Pentire Point - Widemouth	24%	1%	3%	55%	12%	3%	2%	0%
Penwith	41%	6%	8%	17%	21%	4%	3%	0%
Purbeck	37%	1%	3%	39%	9%	8%	1%	2%
Rame Head	47%	5%	3%	9%	31%	3%	3%	0%
South Devon	48%	2%	3%	25%	17%	1%	3%	1%
South Foreland	44%	1%	10%	19%	18%	6%	1%	0%
Spurn	31%	7%	2%	30%	1%	0%	1%	29%
St Agnes	37%	5%	8%	8%	24%	11%	8%	0%
St Bees Head	52%	2%	1%	38%	2%	4%	1%	0%
Suffolk	43%	12%	5%	23%	8%	2%	4%	4%
Sussex	25%	1%	3%	57%	7%	0%	3%	3%
Tennyson	47%	3%	6%	25%	14%	0%	4%	0%
The Lizard	40%	4%	11%	20%	17%	3%	4%	1%
The Roseland	39%	3%	4%	32%	17%	1%	3%	0%
Trevose Head	61%	7%	4%	24%	2%	2%	1%	0%
West Dorset	31%	4%	3%	39%	14%	1%	5%	3%
Total	37.9%	4.0%	4.9%	31.2%	14.2%	3.4%	2.6%	1.8%

The data on this page were generated using GIS by the authors of this Review. It used the shapefiles for the Heritage Coast boundaries provided by Natural England, projected using the OSGB Coordinate Reference System (EPSG27700). The land cover data is taken from the Rural Payment Agency's Crop Map of England (CROME) data for 2020 which is derived from satellite imagery. These data were joined to the Heritage Coast boundaries. No work has been done to ground truth or otherwise check these data.

It should be noted that data in paragraphs 3.10 and 3.11 is derived from GIS analysis by this study using an alternative land cover dataset – the CORINE 2018 data, also derived from satellite imagery.

Appendix VI. Strategic Plans guiding delivery of the definition in each Heritage Coast

Heritage Coast	The primary strategy of most relevance to the Heritage Coast and Heritage Coast national objectives					Names of other strategies covering the Heritage Coast	Notes (any special features etc)
	Name of current strategy	Weblink	Years covered	HC specific?	Or other geography covered		
North Northumberland	Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan	https://www.northumberlandcoastaonb.org/management-plan/	2020-2024	No	Northumberland Coast AONB	Mentioned in Part 1. No mention in Part 2.	The North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan. 2017- 2032 Conclusion the neighbourhood plan recognises the heritage coast, but also places considerable store by non designated heritage assets. This means that the heritage coast doesn't appear to get significant due regard against other assets.
Durham	Durham Heritage Management Plan	https://durhamheritagecoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Heritage-Coast-Management-Plan-2018-2025.pdf	2018-25	Yes		This plan gives a picture of where we are now. It identifies the main concerns by covering the natural resources, the cultural and historic elements and the social and economic conditions in coastal communities. But it is where we want to be seven years time that is the real message of the plan.	Local Authority Local Plans - significant changes over the past two years in the level of planning support County Durham - Sunderland - Community level area plans A wider Tyne to Tees SeaScapes landscape scale partnership is: Durham Coast National Nature Reserve Management Plan DMO Management Plan Local level SPA?SAC/LNR/LWS wildlife site management plans Local Authority site management planning Various visioning documents, access and health related initiatives
North Yorkshire and Cleveland	No - the last one ran until 2020 North York Moors National Park Management Plan	https://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/shared-publications/Heritage-Coast-Management-Plan-2015-2020-Finalcopy-2.pdf https://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/looking-after/new-management-plan	2015 - 2020.	Yes	HC North York Moors national Park.	12 references made to Coast, Coastal and Coastline. No reference to Heritage Coast in Draft Plan.	Shoreline Management Plan North York Moors local plan. (2020) North East Coastal Observatory http://www.northeastcoastalobservatory.org.uk/ Policy in North York Moors Local Plan 4.7 ...Coastal defences can have a significant impact upon visual amenity and nature conservation interests and these impacts will need to be carefully addressed in any proposal. This is especially important as the

								entire National Park coastline is also defined as Heritage Coast where natural assets and recreational opportunities should be protected
Flamborough Head and Spurn	Flamborough Headland and Spurn had a Man Plan from 2002.			No			East Riding Local plan.	The local plan makes reference to both heritage coasts regularly. It is clear that the heritage coast is appreciated and within the planning context protected. No reference is made of positive management.
North Norfolk	State of Norfolk Coast -	https://www.norfolkcoastonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/State-of-the-Norfolk-Norfolk-Coast-Natural-England-report.pdf	2018 - 2036	No	Norfolk Coast AONB	A report on the current environmental condition of the North Norfolk Coast (Natural England) with 1 reference to HC.	North Norfolk Local Plan Draft final submission (Jan 2022) 6.3 Heritage & Undeveloped Coast is section dedicated to HC and its protection.	
Suffolk	Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Management Plan	https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SCH-AONB-Management-Plan-2018-23.pdf	2018 - 2023	No	Suuffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB	A section on - "Relationship with the Suffolk Heritage Coast" which describes the purpose and objectives of Heritage Coasts.		
South Foreland and Dover - Folkstone	The Kent Downs AONB management plan has section dedicated to heritage coast.	https://explore-kent-bucket.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/7/2021/11/16141210/The-Kent-Downs-AONB-Management-Plan-2021-2026-Adopted.pdf	2021 - 2026	No	Kent Downs AONB	Section 9 in the management plan describes the heritage coast; identifies alternative studies into the importance and classification of the heritage coast; identifies the threats and the opportunities to the heritage coast.	Seascape assessment of the Strait of Dover. 2015 Seascape character assessment is a tool and spatial framework to help integrate management decisions. The assessment confirmed the special characteristics and qualities of the Heritage Coasts and the priorities for management. Marine Management Plans and Marine Conservation Zones. Heritage Coasts are included in Policy S-HER-1 (Heritage Assets) and Policy S-SCP-1 (Seascape) in the South Marine Plan. There are three designated MCZs close to or within the Kent Downs Heritage Coasts: Dover to Folkestone;	This is probably the most comprehensive consideration of heritage coasts in any management plan.

						Dover to Deal and the Folkestone Pomerania.		
Sussex	Sussex Heritage Coast A strategy and action plan 2016–20	https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Sussex-Heritage-Coast-A-strategy-and-action-plan-2016-20-FINAL-VERSION.pdf	2016 - 2020	Yes		A full management strategy with action plan. Describing- Context, Policy Backgound including overlap with the SDNP, Principles and Actions including the planning funtion.	<p>South National Park Management Plan (Partnership Management Plan) 2020–2025</p> <p>POLICY 7: Actively promote more joined-up</p> <p>Interpretation Plan for the Sussex Heritage Coast</p> <p>South Downs Local Plan 2019-2024 (NPPF)</p> <p>Shoreline Management Plan</p> <p>Marine Conservation Zones</p> <p>Catchment Management Plans</p> <p>Restoring Estuarine & Coastal Habitat Plan (REACH)</p> <p>Eastbourne Downland Plan</p> <p>Sussex IFCA byelaws and sustainable management of the coast, including the defined area of the Sussex Heritage Coast, through Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).</p>	The Heritage Coast management strategy is now out of date . The National Park plan was re drafted in 2020 and has three mentions of Heritage Coast; the Policy 7 has not changed. Clearly the profile of the Heritage Coast has declined this may be due to changing personnel.
Tennyson and Hampstead	None					The Heritage Coasts are dealt with within the IWAONB Management Plan last adopted by the local authority in Dec 2018 for period 2019 - 2024. In 1992, the decision was taken to incorporate issues relating to Heritage Coasts and the AONB into one overall Isle of Wight AONB Management Plan.	<p>Isle of Wight Core stratgy has no specific policy for Heritage Coast https://www.iow.gov.uk/azservices/documents/2776-Core-Strategy-Adopted-March-2012-updated-web-links-May-2013-with-cover.pdf</p>	Comment from Lead Officer: "The Isle of Wight is the 'destination' and there has always been an issue around the promotion of the IWAONB and the Heritage Coast as separate from the wider IW offer. Therefore IWAONB concentrates on the special character of the AONB and its coast as a matter of course. However separating Heritage Coast from IWAONB adds confusion and

								dilutes messages around important messages for the nationally protected designated landscape."
Purbeck + West Dorset	Dorset AONB Management Plan	https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/DAONB_Managementplan.pdf	2019-2024	No	Dorset AONB	Coast and Sea' is described on p 48, covering all coastal parts of the AONB. The two sections of Heritage Coast and the HC definition is described here. The AONB's coast is mentioned frequently throughout the document but without separate treatment (e.g no specifically coastal policies or actions)		The Dorset Landscape and Seascapes Character Assessment (2010) contains 'transition to the sea character types'.
East Devon	East Devon AONB Partnership Plan	https://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AONB-Partnership-plan_lowres_final.pdf	2019-2024	No	East Devon AONB	Coast is one of the sub-themes in the Plan "concerned with conserving and enhancing the coastal areas of the AONB, including the Heritage Coast/ World Heritage Site"	There is a management Strategy for the East Devon AONB which the Heritage Coast sits within. There is also the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site Management Plan which covers the immediate coastline. In addition, there is a Landscape Character Assessment of East Devon District and the Blackdown Hills AONB. The AONB plan and LCA together address the special qualities (aka special character) of these areas.	The Delivery Plan contains four actions against the 'Coast' theme - all of which are relevant to achieving the national HC objectives (landscape improvements to holiday parks, beach cleans etc).
South Devon	South Devon AONB Management Plan 2019-2024	https://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/management-plan/	2019-2024	No	South Devon AONB	Throughout the South Devon HC is described in conjunction with the AONB. The HC is described on its own page (p12). Key Policy Objective 'Lan/P1 Character'. The special qualities, distinctive character and key features of the South Devon AONB landscape and South Devon Heritage Coast will be conserved and enhanced. Theme 6 Coast and Marine is highly relevant.	South Devon Estuaries Environmental Management Plan 2018 – 2024 https://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Annex_2_SDEMP_-_all_files_combined.pdf	
Cornwall HCs	Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2016-21	https://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/management-plan	2016-21	No	Cornwall AONB	Published in 3 volumes: Action (Vision, Aims and Actions), Policy (strategic policies) and Local (Statements of Significance and Policies for the 12 area sections of the AONB). Ten of these areas contain HCs. HCs are mapped nationally on a map in the Vision document (p3) and are shown in Cornwall on a map of planning designations in the Policies document (p5). No other references to HCs.		

Isles of Scilly	Isles of Scilly AONB Management Plan 2021-25	https://scilly.gov.uk/news/area-outstanding-natural-beauty-management-plan-consultation-2021-2025	2021-25	No	Isles of Scilly AONB	Current version is consultation draft. The AONB sits entirely within the defined Heritage Coast. But no mention of HCs in Plan. Plan has strong focus on nature recovery , natural capital and ecosystem services.		
Lundy	Lundy Marine Management Plan 2017	https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/globalassets/lundy_marine_management_plan_2017.pdf	2017	Yes	Lundy Marine Protected Area	Management Framework, Natural Environment, Historic Environment, Environmental Quality (water and marine litter), Promoting Lundy's MPA, Enjoying the MPA, Living and Working at Lundy).	The Lundy Heritage Coast is referenced in the North Devon AONB Management Plan as an important (and vulnerable in view of windfarm plans) part of the setting of the AONB.	The MPA covers all of the national objectives of Heritage Coasts, but only references the Heritage Coast definition once, under the table of Conservation Status (page 13).
North Devon	North Devon Coast AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024	https://www.northdevon-aonb.org.uk/resources/north-coast-aonb-management-plan-2019-2024	2019-2024	No	North Devon AONB	The Heritage Coasts is referenced frequently, including the areas outside the AONB (see note to right) but is not mapped. Many of the priority actions and indicators are relevant to HC objectives (e.g. improving visitor facilities, improving bathing water quality).	UNESCO North Devon Biosphere Reserve Strategy for Sustainable Development 2014-2024 - no reference to the HC definition. Heritage Coast Management Plans ceased to be produced from 2004 when AONB (CRoW Act) MP replaced them.	The MP contains a Priority Action to "Review of the designated AONB boundary to incorporate all of the defined North Devon Heritage Coast (Lundy island, Braunton Great Field and Braunton Marshes) into the AONB"
Exmoor	Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023	https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/251162/Partnership-Plan-2018-2023-spreads.pdf	2018-2023	No	Exmoor National Park	HC definition of the coast is mentioned once on the two pages dedicated to the NP's Coast (p64-65). One of the high level ambitions in the Plan is "Exmoor's stunning coast is better understood, enjoyed and conserved".	Part of the HC lies in the UNESCO North Devon Biosphere Reserve (see North Devon HC)	
St Bees Head	None - But see policies in the Local Plan.							The Heritage Coast is discussed in the Copeland Core Strategy 2013-2028 and the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038.

Appendix VII. Local Partnerships or Forums guiding delivery in each Heritage Coast

Content is derived from Survey responses from lead staff in each Heritage Coast

Heritage Coast	The primary partnership of most relevance to the Heritage Coast and HC objectives					Names of other partnerships covering the HC
	Name of primary partnership for the HC	Secretariat / lead body	HC Specific?	Or other geographies covered	Description of membership structure	
North Northumberland	Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership and Northumberland County Council	Strategic planning	No	Northumberland Coast AONB	Core members: Local Authority officers Local Authority members Natural England Environment Agency National Trust, Recreation User groups. Tourism Sector. Voluntary Community Groups Observers: HE	Local Access forum
Durham	Durham Heritage Coast Partnership - hosted by Durham County Council	Environment and Design - previously Planning	Yes		Core Members: Local Authority officers and members, Natural England, Environment Agency Historic England (Observing), The County Wildlife Trust National, Recreational user groups (Observing) Reps from Farmers and Landowners, Reps. of the tourism sector (Observing), Reps. of voluntary community groups Statutory undertakers	
North Yorkshire and Cleveland	North York Moors National Park Authority and Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership		No		Core Members: Local Authority officers Natural England, Environment Agency Historic England, The County Wildlife Trust National, RSPB Recreational user groups Reps. of the fishing sector Reps. of the tourism sector Reps. of voluntary community groups Statutory undertakers	Academic partners - University of Hull
Flamborough Head and Spurn	Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership		No	Flamborough Outer Headland Nature Reserve		
North Norfolk	Norfolk Coast Partnership					

Suffolk	Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB Partnership				
South Foreland and Dover - Folkstone	White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, Kent Downs AONB {Partnership				
Sussex	Sussex Heritage Coast Partnership	South Downs National Park Authority - but NPA remit does not cover marine https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/	No		Local Authority officers Core member, active in decision making; Natural England Observing member, less involved in decision making; Environment Agency Core member, active in decision making; The County Wildlife Trust Core member, active in decision making; National Trust Core member, active in decision making; Other environmental NGOs Observing member, less involved in decision making; Reps. of farmers and landowners Observing member, less involved in decision making; Reps. of the fishing sector Observing member, less involved in decision making; Statutory undertakers Core member, active in decision making.
Tennyson and Hampstead	Isle of Wight AONB	Isle of Wight AONB Steering Committee	No	Isle of Wight AONB	Local Authority officers Observing member, less involved in decision making; Local Authority members Core member, active in decision making; Natural England Core member, active in decision making; Environment Agency Core member, active in decision making; National Trust Core member, active in decision making; Recreational user groups Core member, active in decision making; Reps. of farmers and landowners Core member, active in decision making; Reps. of the tourism sector Core

					member, active in decision making; Reps. of voluntary community groups Core member, active in decision making. And Town and Parish Councils , Arts and Culture Sector.	
Purbeck + West Dorset	Dorset AONB Partnership	Dorset AONB Unit (Dorset Council)	No	Dorset AONB	Dorset Council, CLA, Dorset Association of Town & Parish Councils, Dorset County Museum, Dorset CPRE, Dorset Local Nature Partnership, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, Dorset Race Equality Council, Environment Agency, Historic England, Jurassic Coast Trust, National Trust, Natural England, NFU, Purbeck Heritage Network, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council	Dorset Coast Forum (socio-economic issues for the whole Dorset Coast)
East Devon	East Devon AONB Partnership	East Devon AONB Unit (East Devon District Council)	No	East Devon AONB	Devon CC, EDDC, NE, EA, FC, HE, DWT, NT, NFU, Community reps	Jurassic Coast WHS Forum
South Devon	South Devon AONB Partnership	South Devon AONB Unit	No	South Devon AONB		
Cornwall HCs	Cornwall AONB Partnership	Cornwall AONB Unit (CC)	No	Cornwall AONB		
Isles of Scilly	Isles of Scilly AONB Partnership	Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust	No	Isles of Scily AONB		
Lundy	Lundy Management Forum, advised by the Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group (LMPAAG)	LMPAAG administered by the Lundy Field Society	No	TBC. The LMPAAG covers the Lundy Marine Protected Area		
North Devon	North Devon AONB Partnership		No	North Devon AONB		
Exmoor	Exmoor National Park Partnership	ENPA	No	Exmoor National Park		
St Bees Head	None					

Appendix VIII. Local Plan policies and descriptions of special character

Content relating to ‘special character’ is derived from Survey responses from lead staff in each Heritage Coast

Heritage Coast	Local Plan policies		Descriptions of the special character of the Heritage Coast	
	Name of LPA and Current version (status) of the Local Plan	Reference to Heritage Coasts definition in Policies	HC character specifically defined?	Other ways in which special character is described
North Northumberland	Northumberland Council Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036.	Policy ENV 3 (Landscape). C) Within those parts of the North Northumberland Heritage Coast, which are not part of the Northumberland Coast AONB, consideration will be given to the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Also referenced in Policy ENV 4 (Tranquillity, dark night skies and a sense of rurality).	No	Many years ago, pre 2003
Durham	Durham County Council. County Durham Plan 2020-2035	Policy 37 (Durham Heritage Coast and Wider Coastal Zone). States the Council’s commitment to protecting and enhancing the HC. Sets out criteria for development and impacts on the HC. Also referenced in Policy 50 (Supply of aggregates).	Yes	Within the management plan, also in local landscape character area studiesD
North Yorkshire and Cleveland	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan adopted 2018. Scarborough Borough Council. Scarborough Local Plan 2011-32, North York Moors National Park Authority. North York Moors Local Plan adopted 2020.	Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan – Policy LS 3 (Rural Communities Spatial Strategy). Statement that the Council will aim to conserve, protect and enhance the Heritage Coast. Policy N 1 (Landscape) Particular given to protecting and enhancing the landscape character and natural beauty of the Heritage Coast. Scarborough Local Plan No policy includes the Heritage Coast but it is listed as “a landscape ... of particular importance and development should respond to the particular characteristics of these distinctive areas. North York Moors National Park Plan. Importance of the Heritage Coast along the entire NP coast is stated. Proposals which affect the coastal area should have regard to Key Principle 1 of the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast Management Plan. Policy ENV 9 (Historic	Yes	Yes - the NYMNP Landscape Character Assessment

		Landscape Assets) includes the HC in the list of historic assets.		
Flamborough Head and Spurn	East Riding of Yorkshire Council East Riding Local Plan, adopted 2016.	Policy ENV 2 (Promoting a high quality landscape). Proposals should protect and enhance existing landscape character – HC is listed.	No	The East Riding Landscape Character Assessment.
North Norfolk	North Norfolk District Council North Norfolk Local Plan adopted 2008, updated 2012. New Plan in progress.	Plan pre-dates the NPPF. The HC is described alongside the AONB in the 'Spatial Portrait' and is covered specifically by Policy EN 7 (Renewable Energy) under 'areas of national importance' where development will not be permitted unless specified criteria are met.	No	
Suffolk	East Suffolk Council. Suffolk Coastal Local Plan adopted 2020.	Policy SCLP6.3 (Tourism Development within the AONB and Heritage Coast) sets out the criteria for tourism development in the AONB and Heritage Coast		
South Foreland and Dover - Folkstone	Dover District Council. Dover District Local Plan adopted 2010. New Plan in progress.	Status of the HC is included in the description of landscape in relation to Policy DM 15 (Protection of the Countryside – but no specific reference in the policy.		
Sussex	South Downs National Park Authority. South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033. Adopted 2019. Lewes and Eastbourne Councils. Eastbourne Local Plan adopted 2013. New Plan in progress.	South Downs Local Plan. Strategic Policy SD18 (The Open Coast) states that development within the HC will not be permitted unless they conserve and enhance its character or are necessary for the operation needs of activities in support of it. Eastbourne Local Plan. Policy D2 (Heritage Coast) states development will not be permitted in the HC, except for proposals that enhance public access (with criteria).	No	The interpretation Plan for Sussex Heritage Coast claims to identify the special character https://www.redkite-environment.co.uk/resources/SHC%20Interpretation%20Plan%20Final%202018-10-10.pdf
Tennyson and Hampstead	Isle of Wight Council. Island Plan adopted 2012.	The HCs are included in the description of the Island and in relation to Policy DM 12 (Landscape, Seascape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity).	The special character of the IW Heritage Coasts are described on page 94 of the current IWAONB Management Plan	
Purbeck + West Dorset	West Dorset & Weymouth Local Plan (2015) and Purbeck Local Plan (2012) and the emerging Dorset	West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan. Policy ENV 1 (Landscape, Seascape and Geological Interest). Development which would harm the	No	Variously in Local Plans and Landscape Character Assessments. E.g. https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/350

	Council Local Plan (not yet published)	character, special qualities or natural beauty of the Dorset AONB or Heritage Coast, including their characteristic landscape quality and diversity, uninterrupted panoramic views, individual landmarks, and sense of tranquillity and remoteness, will not be permitted. Purbeck Local Plan. Policy LHH (Landscape, Historic Environment and Heritage). HC included within scope - Proposals for development and other works will be expected to conserve the appearance, setting, character, interest, integrity, health and vitality of landscape.		24/337048/East+Dorset+and+Purbeck+Stage+2+front+end.p df/10ea3ae5-fa90-dfa4-fdef-fea4b9d33caa
East Devon	East Devon Local Plan 2016-2031	Glossary defines Heritage Coast as "Areas of undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors" - appears not to recognise the nationally agreed definition. Para 3.11 refers to the 'world heritage coast' suggesting a conflation / confusion of the Heritage Coast and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.	No.	Appendix 1 of the AONB MP summarises 'special qualities and features of significance based on the Devon Landscape Character Areas. Those for the 'Sidmouth and Lyme Bay Coastal Plateau' are all relevant to the HC.
South Devon	South Hams DC. Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	Para 3.60 0 reference to HC and liaison with MMO on marine areas. Policy SPT12. Protecting and enhancing the distinctive landscapes of the Undeveloped Coast, particularly within the South Devon Heritage Coast, with support for improvements to public access to and enjoyment of the coast. Policy DEV24 Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast. Development only permitted where specific criteria met including 'consistent with the relevant Heritage Coast objectives'.	Yes	'Fine, undeveloped, wild and rugged coastline' is the first of the ten special qualities of the AONB. The 'distinctive characteristics' of this special quality are described in Annex 4 of the Management 'Understanding the Special Qualities of the South Devon AONB'
Cornwall HCs	Cornwall Council. Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030	Policy 23 (Natural Environment) contains subsection 2(b) The Heritage Coast and Areas of Great Landscape Value Development within the Heritage Coast and / or Areas of Great Landscape Value should maintain the character and distinctive landscape qualities of such areas. 2 indicators measure development in the HCs under heading Protection of the Landscape 23.3: Number	No	The Local Area Sections of the MP contain Statements of Significance which include reference to the coastal landscape. But no specific mention of Heritage Coasts

		of new dwellings approved in the landscape designations AONB and Heritage Coast; 23.4: Number of applications approved for wind turbines and Solar Farms in the landscape designations AONB and Heritage Coast.		
Isles of Scilly	Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2021-2030	Policy OE1. Protecting and enhancing the landscape and seascape. 1) Development will only be permitted where it aligns with the statutory purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and therefore conserves and enhances the islands' landscape, seascape and scenic beauty. Development must take into account and respect: b) the undeveloped and special character of the Heritage Coast	No	The AONB Management Plan includes a statement of significance for the AONB covering landscape character, natural capital and nature conservation, historic and built environment and culture / sense of place.
Lundy	North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031. Adopted October 2018	Policy ST09: Coast and Estuary Strategy. Part (5) The integrity of the coast and estuary as an important wildlife corridor will be protected and enhanced. The importance of the undeveloped coastal, estuarine and marine environments, including the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will be recognised through supporting designations, plans and policies. The undeveloped character of the Heritage Coasts will be protected. Part (7) Development within the Undeveloped Coast and estuary will be supported where it does not detract from the unspoilt character, appearance and tranquillity of the area, nor the undeveloped character of the Heritage Coasts, and it is required because it cannot reasonably be located outside the Undeveloped Coast and estuary.	Yes	Defined in the Devon Landscape Character Assessment (Lundy Character Area) under 'Special Qualities and Features'.
North Devon	North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031. Adopted October 2018	Policy ST09: Coast & Estuary. The integrity of the coast and estuary as an important wildlife corridor will be protected and enhanced. The importance of the undeveloped coastal, estuarine and marine environments, including the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will be recognised through supporting designations, plans and policies. The undeveloped character of the Heritage Coasts will be protected.	No	List of Special Qualities identified in the AONB Management Plan (many are coastal based). The following also capture Heritage Coast Qualities: Devon Landscape Character Areas (7 areas covering Heritage Coast) Landscape Character Types 14 of which are wholly or partly contained within the Heritage Coasts. Seascape Character Assessment 2015 (covers heritage Coasts in Hartland, Lundy, North Devon and Exmoor).

		Policy DM08 includes: (4) Development within the Heritage Coast should maintain the character and distinctive landscape qualities of the area.		
Exmoor	Exmoor National Park Authority. Exmoor National Park Local Plan	The Exmoor HC is reference frequently and the NPPF guidance is acknowledged. Policies CE-S1 Landscape and Seascape Character, CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor’s Landscapes and Seascapes, and CC-S2 Coastal Development aim to ensure that development proposals retain the character of the predominantly undeveloped nature of the Heritage Coast and are consistent with national purposes.	No	Reference to key characteristics in Exmoor Landscape Character Assessment (2018). The Exmoor HC lies within two LCTs High Coastal Heaths and High Wooded Coast, Combes and Cleaves.
St Bees Head	Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028	Strategic Objective 16: Conserve and enhance all landscapes in the Borough, with added protection given to the designated St Bees Head Heritage Coast site. The HC is referenced frequently, including the need to preserve views to and from it. Policy ENV2 – Coastal Management. To reinforce the Coastal Zone’s assets and opportunities the Council will: E Protect the intrinsic qualities of the St Bees Head Heritage Coast in terms of development proposals within or affecting views from the designation. At the same time encourage schemes which assist appropriate access to and interpretation of the Heritage Coast area Para. 4.11.7 identifies Tourism Opportunity Sites including the Whitehaven Coastal Fringe – the ‘Colourful Coast’: linking Whitehaven Harbour with Haig Pit and St Bees Heritage Coast.	No	This is acknowledged in the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment Guidance 2011, the Copeland Landscape Character Assessment 2021 and the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038.

Appendix IX. Online surveys used to collect views from leading member of staff responsible in each Heritage Coast and from wider stakeholders

Survey 1. For people leading work in England's Heritage Coasts

This is a 'paper' version of the online survey, provided as a reference to the questions. Please provide your responses online using this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/3F66rdnZ8V>

Natural England has commissioned a review of Heritage Coasts in England to collate evidence on the delivery of Heritage Coast objectives since a previous study in 2006. The review is taking place between January and March 2022 and is being done by Rural Focus Ltd (Robert Deane and Richard Clarke), reporting to Sarah Manning (Natural England). The objectives of the work are to:

- Identify changes in policy and environmental context and the influence this has had on Heritage Coasts and the organisations overseeing their management.
- Develop an overview of the level of success and the value of the Heritage Coast definition.
- Take a forward-look covering the next fifteen years and provide 'future proofing' recommendations.

Evidence for the review is being gathered through consultation with a range of people who have experience or interest in England's Heritage Coasts. This survey is for people whose work contributes to the delivery of the objectives of Heritage Coasts, and whose knowledge and views will be invaluable to this review. If you are not the main person in your organisation with responsibility for the Heritage Coast, we would be grateful if you would forward on the link to this survey to them and ask them to complete it.

The survey is split into six sections and is likely to take about 30 minutes to complete.

All responses will be treated in confidence and not shared outside the project team of Natural England and Rural Focus Ltd. By taking part in this survey, you are agreeing that Rural Focus Ltd will hold the information you provide until the end of the project, after which it will be deleted.

You can read Rural Focus' privacy policy here <https://bit.ly/3wnRRbG>.

Anyone unfamiliar with the Heritage Coast definition can get further information here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>.

The previous review (2006) can be viewed here:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4594438590431232>

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR WORK

1. Please state your name

2. What is your email address (in case we want to follow-up some of your responses)?

3. Please state the organisation you are representing

4. What is your role (job title and responsibilities) in this organisation?

5. How long have you held this role? If you have longer experience of working in Heritage Coasts from previous roles, please summarise that briefly.

6. Which of England's Heritage Coasts do you currently work in? (Note: The Heritage Coasts are listed in a clockwise order. Some adjacent Heritage Coastshave been combined).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Northumberland | <input type="checkbox"/> Purbeck + West Dorset |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Durham | <input type="checkbox"/> East Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Yorkshire and Cleveland | <input type="checkbox"/> South Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Headland | <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Coasts in Cornwall (10 in total) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spurn | <input type="checkbox"/> Isles of Scilly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Norfolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Lundy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suffolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Hartland (Devon) + North Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Foreland + Dover Folkestone | <input type="checkbox"/> Exmoor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sussex | <input type="checkbox"/> St Bees Head |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennyson + Hamstead | |

7. If you also have previous experience of working in other Heritage Coasts, please select them from the list below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Northumberland | <input type="checkbox"/> Purbeck + West Dorset |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Durham | <input type="checkbox"/> East Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Yorkshire and Cleveland | <input type="checkbox"/> South Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Headland | <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Coasts in Cornwall (10 in total) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spurn | <input type="checkbox"/> Isles of Scilly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Norfolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Lundy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suffolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Hartland (Devon) + North Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Foreland + Dover Folkestone | <input type="checkbox"/> Exmoor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sussex | <input type="checkbox"/> St Bees Head |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennyson + Hamstead | |

GOVERNANCE, DECISION-MAKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

This section asks about what processes are in place to assist decision-making in relation to the Heritage Coast objectives

8. Please name the organisation that has the primary responsibility for overseeing delivery of the Heritage Coast objectives in your area. We assume this is the organisation you work for, but if not, please say so. If you work across several Heritage Coasts and different organisations have the leading role, please say so.

9. Within this organisation, which type of department has the main responsibility for overseeing delivery of the Heritage Coast objectives?

- Countryside management / Natural environment
- Strategic planning
- Economy and communities
- Other (please state)

10. Is there a partnership or forum of stakeholder organisations that supports the Heritage Coast and its objectives?

- Yes, there is a partnership / forum that is currently active and is focussed specifically on the Heritage Coast
- Yes, there is a partnership or forum that is currently active that covers the Heritage Coast within a broader remit (for instance an AONB or NP)
- There was a partnership / forum specifically for the Heritage Coast but it is no longer active
- Other (please state)

11. Please name the partnership or forum (current and/or previous) from the previous question.

12. If there is a partnership or forum that supports the Heritage Coast (including within a broader remit), please indicate the membership of the group and their level of involvement in recent years. We appreciate that the two categories of involvement are somewhat subjective. If you want to qualify your answers, please do so in the following question.

	A core member, attending most meetings and active in decision making	A member who tends to take more of an observing role and is less involved in decision making
Local Authority officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Authority members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural England	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forestry Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic England	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The County Wildlife Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RSPB	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other environmental NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational user groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representatives of farmers and landowners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representatives of the fishing sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representatives of the tourism sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statutory undertakers (e.g. Utilities, harbour authorities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Please add any other types of partnership or forum members not listed above. You can also add other comments about the working of the partnership / forum here.

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN YOUR HERITAGE COAST

This section asks about how the Heritage Coast objectives are reflected in adopted policies and plans for your area.

14. Is there a current management plan or strategy that has been prepared specifically for the Heritage Coast? If so, it would be very helpful if you could insert a weblink to the document(s) so we can view it. If you are aware that there was a Heritage Coast Management Plan in the last 15 years that has not been updated, please state this below.

15. Are Heritage Coast objectives addressed in other current plans or strategies that apply to your area? They may include AONB or NP Management Plans, Local Plans, Landscape/Seascape Strategies or Economic Development Strategies.

Please name the plans or strategies you are aware of. There is no need to go into detail into how these plans or strategies address Heritage Coast objectives, but it would be helpful if you could add weblinks to these documents.

16. To the best of your knowledge, has the 'special character' of your Heritage Coast been identified and published? This may have been done in a Management Plan or Strategy or as part of the Local Plan. (The National Planning Policy Framework (para.178) states that planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of Heritage Coasts).

17. If the 'special character' of the Heritage Coast has been identified and published, are you aware that it is currently being used in the following ways

	Actively used	Rarely used	Never used
Development planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management (environmental or recreational) planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication and promotion of the Heritage Coast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. If you have any other comments on the 'special character' of your Heritage Coast and how it is referred to, please add them below.

HERITAGE COAST OBJECTIVES (referred to in following questions)

The objectives of Heritage Coasts were redefined and broadened by the Countryside Commission and ratified by the Government of the day in 1992 as follows. **Bold text** has been added here to draw attention to the focus of each objective.

The finest stretches of coast justify national recognition as Heritage Coasts. They should be given effective protection and management: stronger measures apply there than elsewhere. The main objectives for Heritage Coasts, (which apply only once an area has been defined as Heritage Coast) are:

- to conserve, protect and enhance the **natural beauty** of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral and marine **flora and fauna**, and their **heritage features** of architectural, historical and archaeological interest;
- to facilitate and enhance their **enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public** by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with, the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features;
- to maintain and improve (where necessary) the **environmental health of inshore waters** affecting heritage coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures;
- to take account of **the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of economic and social needs of the small communities** on these coasts, by promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features.

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES OF ACTIVITY

This section asks you about actions that are currently taking place, or have been undertaken in recent years, that have addressed the national Heritage Coast objectives in your area.

19. Could you please name any current projects or programmes of activity that are taking place in your area that you consider to be significant in addressing any or all of the national Heritage Coast objectives listed in the previous page. There is no need to describe them in detail at this stage - we will discuss them with you later in this review. Please include locally-developed projects and national schemes.

20. Could you please name any projects or programmes of activity that you are aware of having taken place previously in your Heritage Coast during the last 15 years. These should be activities that addressed any or all of the national Heritage Coast objectives. Again, there is no need to describe them in detail - we will follow them up with you later.

21. Please name any sources of external funding (public or private) that have been used to support the locally-developed projects you named in the previous two questions. It would be helpful if you can give the names of funding sources being used in current projects first and then name those from previous projects.

22. This question asks you to make a judgement about how each of the Heritage Coast national objectives are being addressed in your Heritage Coast, through the local projects and programmes you have told us about above. The rows summarise the objectives from the full descriptions on the previous page which you might want to refer to when selecting the appropriate column option. If you want to qualify any of your answers, you can do so in the following question.

	A priority for the HC being actively addressed now through a local project	A priority for the HC being addressed now through national schemes	A focus of activity in the past, but not subject to current actions	To my knowledge, never been the focus of specific activity in this area
Natural beauty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flora and fauna	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heritage features	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health of inshore waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs of agriculture, forestry & fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social needs of communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. If you want to tell us anything else about how Heritage Coast objectives are being, or have been, addressed in your area, please do so below.

PROMOTION OF YOUR HERITAGE COAST

This section asks about any promotional material and branding that is used to highlight your Heritage Coast and its special characteristics to the public.

24. Would you say that the environmental and cultural qualities of your Heritage Coast are highlighted strongly in material that is used by public bodies or tourism businesses to promote the area to local recreational users and/or visitors?
- Yes, by public bodies
 - Yes, by tourism businesses and initiatives
 - No
 - I can't say
 - Other (please state)
25. If there are online resources (e.g. one or more websites) that promote your Heritage Coast experiences to the public (local users and/or visitors), please insert the weblinks below. Alternatively, if there are printed leaflets not available online, please list them below.

26. Is there recognised branding that is used to promote your Heritage Coast
- Yes, we have our own branding (e.g. logo, name, images) that has been developed specifically for this Heritage Coast definition
 - Yes, branding that applies more widely to this area (for instance AONB or NP) is used and/or adapted to promote the Heritage Coast
 - National promotional material is used to promote the Heritage Coast
 - Other (please state)
27. If you have anything else you would like to tell us about how public appreciation and understanding of your Heritage Coast and what it offers is promoted, please do so below.

RESOURCING OF YOUR HERITAGE COAST

This section asks about the levels of staffing currently involved in supporting the Heritage Coast definition

28. Please select the appropriate options to indicate the number of staff involved in delivery the Heritage Coast objectives in your area. (FTE means full time equivalent).

	None	Less than one FTE position	One FTE position	Two or three TFE positions	More than three FTE positions
A dedicated Heritage Coast officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other public authority roles undertaking work on Heritage Coast objectives in the Heritage Coast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roles in other local bodies (NGOs, estates, etc) undertaking HC objectives in the HC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29. How has the resourcing of the Heritage Coast and availability of staff to deliver its objectives changed in the last 15 years? For instance, if there was previously a dedicated Heritage Coast officer but none now, or if the role of NGOs and other organisations has increased in recent years, please say so.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

30. If you would like to make any other points or ask us a question about the review, please do so below.

Survey 2. For people with a professional or personal interest in England's Heritage Coasts

This is a 'paper' version of the online survey, provided as a reference to the questions. Please provide your responses online using this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/ce7i7i9vUv>

Natural England has commissioned a review of the Heritage Coasts which cover England's finest stretches of coastline and coastal waters. Evidence for the review is being gathered through contact with a range of people who have experience or interest in these Heritage Coasts.

This survey is for people who have a professional or personal interest in England's Heritage Coasts at a national, regional or local scale. If you would like to forward the link to this survey to a colleague, please do so.

The review is being done by Rural Focus Ltd (Robert Deane and Richard Clarke), reporting to Sarah Manning (Natural England). All responses will be treated in confidence and not shared outside this project team. By taking part in this survey, you are agreeing that Rural Focus Ltd will hold the information you provide until the end of the project, after which it will be deleted. You can read Rural Focus' privacy policy here <https://bit.ly/3wnRRbG>.

If you want to find out more about the Heritage Coast definition, you can access that here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>.

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR WORK

31. Please state your name

32. Please state the organisation, group or business you are representing

33. What is your role in this organisation (e.g. your job title or position)?


34. Please select the Heritage Coasts that you have been involved with (for instance where you live or work or which you have supported through a partnership, project or in other ways). In the following list some adjacent Heritage Coasts have been combined for brevity. See the map on the following page for locations.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Northumberland | <input type="checkbox"/> East Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Durham | <input type="checkbox"/> South Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Yorkshire and Cleveland | <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Coasts in Cornwall (10 in total) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough Headland | <input type="checkbox"/> Isles of Scilly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spurn | <input type="checkbox"/> Lundy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Norfolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Hartland (Devon) + North Devon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suffolk | <input type="checkbox"/> Exmoor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Foreland + Dover Folkestone | <input type="checkbox"/> St Bees Head |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sussex | <input type="checkbox"/> All Heritage Coasts, through work at a national level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennyson + Hamstead | <input type="checkbox"/> None specifically, but I work on coastal/marine issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purbeck + West Dorset | |

35. To help us ask you questions that are most appropriate to your experience of Heritage Coasts, please select the option below that most closely matches you. If several options apply to you, please choose the first of them in the list.

- I work on coastal, marine or related issues at a national or regional level (e.g. for a national government agency, NGO or representative body)
- I work for a local authority (e.g. in planning, countryside management, economic development or as a project officer)

- I am an elected member of a local authority
- I run a business in a coastal area (e.g. in tourism, farming, fishing)
- I represent a community or environmental group in a coastal area
- None of the above, but I have a personal interest in Heritage Coasts



Go to questions
on the next page



Go to questions
on Page 8

POLICY PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HERITAGE COASTS

The following questions ask about the current strategic priorities and objectives of your organisation that may be relevant to the Heritage Coast definition or Heritage Coast areas.

Note: In this survey, the word ‘definition’ is used instead of ‘designation’ for Heritage Coasts to show their non-statutory basis. For reference, the national policy objectives of Heritage Coasts, as redefined by Government in 1992, are as follows (bold text added for emphasis and numerals added for reference).

“The finest stretches of coast justify national recognition as Heritage Coasts. They should be given effective protection and management: stronger measures apply there than elsewhere. The main objectives for Heritage Coasts, (which apply only once an area has been defined as Heritage Coast) are:

- A. to conserve, protect and enhance the **natural beauty** of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral, and marine **flora and fauna**, and their **heritage features** of architectural, historical and archaeological interest;
- B. to facilitate and enhance their **enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public** by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with, the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features;
- C. to maintain and improve (where necessary) the **environmental health of inshore waters** affecting heritage coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures;
- D. to take account of **the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of economic and social needs of the small communities** on these coasts, by promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features”.

36. We are keen to understand the priorities that your organisation has for areas that are defined as Heritage Coasts. Please briefly describe the policies or programmes of work that you or your colleagues are currently working on that you think are particularly relevant to any of the objectives (A to D above) of Heritage Coasts.

37. Are there any of the Heritage Coast objectives (A to D above), or elements of these objectives, that you think are not a current priority, or are a significantly lower priority? If so, please describe them.

38. Are there other significant issues of interest to your organisation that are affecting Heritage Coasts that are not encompassed by the objectives A-D above? Do you see these other issues as being in conflict or synergy with Heritage Coast objectives?

Questions for people who work in national / regional bodies and local authorities

39. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the current strategic priorities of your organisation in coastal/in-shore environments and communities?

THE WORK OF PARTNERSHIPS DELIVERING HERITAGE COAST OBJECTIVES

This section asks about your experience of local partnerships or forums that cover Heritage Coast objectives.

40. Are you or your organisation a member of a partnership or forum that supports a Heritage Coast?
- Yes, a member of a partnership or forum that has a specific remit for the Heritage Coast
 - Yes, a member of a partnership or forum covering a larger coastal or inshore marine area
 - Yes, a member of a broader landscape partnership (for instance AONB or NP) that includes a Heritage Coast
 - No.

The following four questions are relevant if you answered 'Yes' to the question above.

41. Please name the partnership(s) or forum(s) you are a member of.

42. Thinking about the national objectives of Heritage Coasts (i.e. the natural environment and heritage, public recreation and appreciation, the health of inshore waters, and the needs of businesses and local communities), how relevant do you think the work of the partnership or forum is to achieving these objectives? If you have experience of more than one partnership, please answer for the one that is most involved in Heritage Coasts.
- Highly relevant – there is a clear focus on the coast itself and all or several on these objectives
 - Less relevant – their work of the partnership covers a larger geographical / landscape area and/or a broader range of topics
 - Other (please state)

Questions for people who work in national / regional bodies and local authorities

43. Thinking about your involvement in recent years, how have you been able to assist the work of the partnership(s) or forum(s) in relation to the Heritage Coast? Are there particular topics or projects that you have been able to support or guide – for instance with technical advice, funding or providing contacts?

44. This question is about the amount of time and other resources you are able to commit to the partnership(s) or forum(s) compared to how much you would like to give. Please select the most relevant option or add your own under ‘other’

- We are able to commit the time and other resources to the coastal work of the partnership that we think is needed
- Other commitments and pressures mean we are not able to provide as much input to the partnership on coastal issues as we would like to
- We are interested in providing more input to the partnership and its coastal work but are not given the opportunity to do so
- Other (please state)

45. If you answered ‘No’ to question 10, can you describe any other way that you engage with, or have an effect, on Heritage Coasts.

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR HERITAGE COASTS

This section asks about your experience of the awareness and support that local communities and key business sectors have for the Heritage Coast definition.

46. How much do you think the following groups know about and value the status of England’s defined Heritage Coasts?

	It is well known and valued by them	Well known but not valued	A little known	Not known at all
Local residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitors to the coast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmers and landowners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fishing businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions for people who work in national / regional bodies and local authorities

47. Can you give examples of activities where communities and/or businesses have supported the Heritage Coast in particularly effective ways? This might be through volunteering in practical activities, promotion of the Heritage Coast to their members or customers or in providing financial support.

48. Is there a need to raise awareness amongst the public and businesses about the protection, management and enjoyment of Heritage Coasts (for instance through signage, branding, leaflets, social media or events)?

- Yes, the status and value of Heritage Coasts should be better known and understood, distinguishing them from other parts of England's coast
- The profile and needs of all of England's coasts should be promoted equally, with no distinction given to Heritage Coasts
- No, there is no need to raise the public profile of England's coasts, whether a Heritage Coast or not.
- Other (please state)

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM BEING A HERITAGE COAST

6. If you can, please highlight one or more examples of particular achievements that have come from Heritage Coast status, protection or management. These could include a conservation project, planning decision, inward investment, public event, community benefit or other success arising from Heritage Coast status.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

49. If you would like to make any other points or ask us a question about the review, please do so below.

50. Finally, please give email address in case we want to follow-up some of your responses. This is entirely optional.

End of survey for people who work in national / regional bodies and local authorities

THE PRIORITIES FOR ACTION IN HERITAGE COASTS

This section asks what you think are the most pressing issues and needs in your area of Heritage Coast.

Note: In this survey, the word ‘definition’ is used instead of ‘designation’ for Heritage Coasts to show their non-statutory basis. For reference, the national policy objectives of Heritage Coasts, as redefined by Government in 1992, are as follows (bold text added for emphasis and numerals added for reference).

“The finest stretches of coast justify national recognition as Heritage Coasts. They should be given effective protection and management: stronger measures apply there than elsewhere. The main objectives for Heritage Coasts, (which apply only once an area has been defined as Heritage Coast) are:

- A. to conserve, protect and enhance the **natural beauty** of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral, and marine **flora and fauna**, and their **heritage features** of architectural, historical and archaeological interest;
- B. to facilitate and enhance their **enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public** by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with, the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features;
- C. to maintain and improve (where necessary) the **environmental health of inshore waters** affecting heritage coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures;
- D. to take account of **the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of economic and social needs of the small communities** on these coasts, by promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features”.

7. From your experience of the issues facing the Heritage Coast, please indicate which of the following objectives you think are high, medium and low priorities for action?

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Conserving the natural environment and heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhancing public experiences and understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving the health of inshore waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking account of the needs of agriculture, forestry & fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking account of the needs of local communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Are there other significant issues affecting the protection, use and enjoyment of the Heritage Coast that you think are important and that are not encompassed by the items listed above? If so, please state them.

THE WORK OF PARTNERSHIPS DELIVERING HERITAGE COAST OBJECTIVES

This section asks about your experience of local partnerships or forums that cover Heritage Coast objectives.

9. Have you or your organisation any experience of taking part in a partnership or forum of organisations covering your area of coast?
- Yes, we are a full member of a partnership or forum that meets formally at least twice a year (or did before the Covid pandemic)
 - Yes, we have been invited to attend meetings periodically (for instance annually) that have been organised by a partnership or forum
 - No, we are not aware of there being a partnership or forum covering the coast
 - Other (please state)

The following three questions are relevant if you answered 'Yes' to the question above.

10. Please name the partnership(s) or forum(s) you were thinking of in the previous question.

11. How relevant do you think the work of the partnership or forum is to addressing the priorities we asked about in the previous section (i.e. the natural environment, public recreation, health of waters, needs of businesses and communities and any other priorities you have)?
- Highly relevant – there is a clear focus on the coast itself and all or several on these priorities
 - Less relevant – the work of the partnership covers a larger geographical / landscape area and/or a broader range of topics
 - Other (please state)

12. Thinking about your involvement in recent years, how have you been able to assist the work of the partnership(s) or forum(s) in relation to the Heritage Coast? Are there particular topics or projects that you have been able to support or guide – for instance with your advice, practical support or funding?

13. If you answered 'No' to question 8, can you describe any other ways that you engage with or have an effect on Heritage Coasts.

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR HERITAGE COASTS

This section asks about how local communities and key business sectors relate to the status of the Heritage Coast.

14. How much do you think the following groups know about and value the status of your area as one of England’s defined Heritage Coasts?

	It is well known and valued by them	Well known but not valued	A little known	Not known at all
Local residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitors to the coast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmers and landowners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fishing businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Can you give examples of activities where communities and/or businesses in your area have supported the Heritage Coast in particularly effective ways? This might be through volunteering in practical activities, promotion of the Heritage Coast to their members or customers or in providing financial support.

16. Is there a need to raise awareness amongst the public and businesses about the protection, management and enjoyment of Heritage Coasts (for instance through signage, branding, leaflets, social media or events)?

- Yes, the status and value of Heritage Coasts should be better known and understood, distinguishing them from other parts of England’s coast
- The profile and needs of all of England’s coasts should be promoted equally, with no distinction given to Heritage Coasts
- No, there is no need to raise the public profile of England’s coasts, whether a Heritage Coast or not.
- Other (please state)

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM BEING A HERITAGE COAST

17. If you can, please highlight one or more examples of particular achievements that have come from Heritage Coast status, protection or management. These could include a conservation project, planning decision, inward investment, public event, community benefit or other success arising from Heritage Coast status.

Questions for people who work in national / regional bodies and local authorities

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

18. If you would like to make any other points or ask us a question about the review, please do so below.

19. Finally, please give email address in case we want to follow-up some of your responses. This is entirely optional.

End of survey for other people with interests in Heritage Coasts