

# LOWESTOFT SEAFRONT VISION

## (ROYAL PLAIN, ROYAL GREEN, & SOUTH QUAY WHARF)

### CONTEXT

Thank you for your interest in the Lowestoft Seafront Vision project, which will see East Suffolk Council bring forward plans to improve the area for residents, businesses, visitors, and community groups, to enhance the town as a place to live, work and visit.

Phase 1 of the Seafront Vision will see works to the popular areas of Royal Plain, Royal Green, and South Quay Wharf take place later this year, funded through part of Lowestoft's £24.9m allocation from HM Government's Towns Fund.

Lowestoft is a traditional seaside resort, first developed as a bathing site in the 1760s, and further developed by Sir Samuel Morton Peto whose railway, built in 1847, enabled Lowestoft to become a flourishing seaside holiday resort. Much of Peto's seaside resort in south Lowestoft still exists, including the Grade II listed Kirkley Cliff and Wellington Esplanade terraces, which are located within the South Lowestoft and Kirkley Conservation Area.

In 2021, East Suffolk Council, led by the Economic Regeneration team, commissioned the London Road, Lowestoft High Street Heritage Action Zone and Seafront Masterplan, which provides initial concept proposals for how changes to public spaces and the urban environment can help regenerate South Lowestoft and Kirkley. Royal Plain acts as a gateway to the masterplan area from the adjoining port area and connects to the centre of Lowestoft to the north. Comments from the consultation events to develop this masterplan have been taken forward to create the designs you see today.

### ROYAL PLAIN

Responding to key routes to and from surrounding spaces such as the bascule bridge, South Pier, Esplanade and Marine Parade, proposals for Royal Plain incorporate both hard and soft landscape features to help 'frame' the space and create a more enclosed and comfortable setting in which to spend time.

The improvements will see:

- New fountain and mirror pool (this was one of the most requested features the community would like to see reinstated)
- New benches and raised planters to the north and west.
- Additional lighting
- Improved surfacing within the East Point Pavilion courtyard garden to improve access and provide flexible events space, alongside new planting to create a more intimate space with improved shade and shelter.



## ROYAL GREEN

The design proposals for Royal Green draw inspiration from the beach, broads, harbour, and piers.

The improvements will see:

- The existing brick walls along the esplanade removed.
- Diverse soft landscape edges along the esplanade and the car park, inspired by coastal dunes, will see resilient trees, shrubs, coastal grasses, and flora planted.
- New and refurbished bench seating combined with boulder groupings that relate to the boulders on the beach.
- Exercise stations and improved seating areas are dotted along the length of the site.
- New games area, aimed at older children and teenagers, together with a new bouldering facility (requested through consultation with students) beside the existing play area which was extended and enhanced in 2019.
- New cycle hub to the north, encouraging active travel and providing space for e-bikes, bicycle parking, and a bike repair station.
- Electric vehicle charging points introduced.



## SOUTH QUAY WHARF

Proposals for South Quay Wharf imagine the space as an urban balcony from which to enjoy the view over the harbour and bascule bridge.

The space will see:

- Raised planters
- Provide a sheltered garden backdrop from which to watch the boats leaving and returning.
- Planting of species native to the Broads, including willow and alder trees to provide shelter, and underplanting features shrubs and spring and summer flowers associated with woodland edges.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS THIS EVENT FOR?

We have previously consulted with residents, businesses, schools and community groups to understand what they would like to see at their seafront. These informed the London Road, Lowestoft High Street Heritage Action Zone and Seafront Masterplan.

We are now at the stage where we would like to share the latest designs with you, which show how we have incorporated these comments as we approach the stage of submitting a planning application to East Suffolk Council. The event will allow you to view the designs and discuss them with the team.

## WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT?

East Suffolk Council are working in partnership with Associated British Ports and Coastal Partnership East/Lowestoft Flood Protection, with designs co-created by Hemingway Design, Untitled Practice, and Gelling Studios. We are also working closely with the operators of East Point Pavilion, Waveney Disability Forum, and other local businesses.

## WHAT TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSED?

The improvements are the first phase of the London Road, Lowestoft High Street Heritage Action Zone and Seafront Masterplan. They include the installation of new fountains at Royal Plain, enhanced green spaces, public realm, and leisure provision with stated aims to:

- Maintain and grow a vibrant visitor economy
- Impart a sense of ownership, for everyone who lives, works, and visits Lowestoft and Kirkley, particularly for young people, encouraging them to have fun and express themselves.
- Create an uplifting and exhilarating sense of arrival onto the seafront from the town centre, and a transition from promenade to town centre, via Station Quarter.
- Create an accessible seafront that encourages social interaction and encourages people to linger longer
- Design a seafront that responds positively to the climate and biodiversity crises.
- Celebrate the site's history and natural environment.
- Shine a light on this unique 'most easterly town' that is becoming increasingly alive with innovation and creative energy.
- Create spaces and places that provide long term place marketing opportunities for Lowestoft.
- Attract and stimulate inward investment by encouraging local businesses to start-up, grow, and invest in Lowestoft and Kirkley

## WILL THE WORKS EVER HAPPEN?

Yes, the project is being funded by an allocation from Lowestoft's successful bid to HM Government's Towns Fund, from which we have secured £24.9m to be spent on a number of projects across Lowestoft. We anticipate works starting later this year, avoiding the summer tourist season, and will be completed by Spring/Summer 2024.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER TODAY?

As we have undertaken consultation events previously where we have collected your comments to inform the designs, we are now at the stage where we will submit the designs for planning permission in the coming weeks. However, we welcome your comments which can be sent to us at [thinklowestoft@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:thinklowestoft@eastsuffolk.gov.uk).

## WHY ARE EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL DOING THESE PROJECTS? WHY NOW?

East Suffolk Council recognise that further work needs to be done to regenerate the wider area to make it a more desirable place to live, work, invest in, and visit. We often receive comments from the community about how we could improve the town, so that it can be a place people are proud of. The projects that are being delivered in the Historic Quarter, Cultural Quarter (Town Centre), Station Quarter, and Seafront have been made possible due to recent funding opportunities that we haven't necessarily been able to access before. Recently, we have secured nearly £30m from HM Government's Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund, which has been match funded by East Suffolk Council. In 2021, the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan was developed by Lowestoft Place Board in partnership with East Suffolk Council, which sets out ambitious plans for future development and investment in Lowestoft over the next 10 years.

## HOW WILL DISABLED ACCESS BE IMPROVED?

East Suffolk Council has a responsibility to ensure all areas are accessible where possible. In some cases, this isn't possible (such as some of the cliff ramps between the upper and lower promenades due to the gradient). However, we are working closely with the Waveney Disability Forum, who have provided insight and suggestions for the designs.

## WHAT ELSE IS BEING DELIVERED AROUND THE SEAFRONT?

At the seafront, we have so far seen the delivery of:

**EAST POINT PAVILION** - The iconic seafront venue reopened in June 2022, as the first project delivered through HM Government's Towns Fund. It is operated by the team behind First Light Festival CIC. The Victorian-style glass pavilion situated on Royal Plain, is now a thriving cultural and community space for the town, providing trading space for small entrepreneurial 'pop-up' businesses, and curate a year-round cultural and community programme. The venue now also has a changing places facility which contains equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches and space for carers.

**EASTERN EDGE BEACH HUTS & BEACH HUT REFURBISHMENT** – Completed in Summer 2022, and designed by Norwich-based architects Chaplin Farrant, the £2.6m project created split level beach huts which have replaced the former Jubilee Chalets. The project also saw vital works to strengthen the cliff undertaken. Ten of the most central huts have been designed to be more easily accessible for wheelchairs and buggies. The existing beach huts have also been refurbished, now painted in colourful pastels from Lowestoft colour palette. Beach huts can be hired through Lowestoft Beach Hut Hire.

**BEACH BOARDWALK** - A new boardwalk opened in June 2022 allowing people with disabilities and parents with pushchairs better access to the seafront. The boardwalk, created in collaboration with East Suffolk Council and Waveney Disability Forum, is located near to public toilets, the beach access ramp and the Claremont car park and will provide year-round access to the beach.

We will also see in the near future:

**JUBILEE PARADE PHASE 3** - in early 2023, East Suffolk Council was awarded £4.3m through HM Government's Levelling Up Fund to bring forward the next phase of Jubilee Parade, located on Lowestoft's seafront. The development will include a new two-storey building with a first-floor café, offering uninterrupted views of the sea and the award-winning South Beach, along with new showers, toilets, and a Changing Places facility.

**LOWESTOFT FLOOD RISK PROJECT** - The flood protection scheme seeks to develop a way forward to reduce the risk of tidal flooding, caused by a tidal surge that develops in the North Sea along the eastern coastline of the UK as demonstrated by the events in 1953 and most recently in December 2013. Lowestoft has very limited existing tidal flood defences and without further investment, the town will remain at significant risk. The Lowestoft tidal barrier and flood walls are to make up the towns permanent flood defences. When complete, the Lowestoft Flood Protection scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to more than 1,500 homes and 825 businesses in the town.

**For more information on our regeneration projects, please visit [www.thinklowestoft.co.uk](http://www.thinklowestoft.co.uk) or follow our social media channels by searching 'Think Lowestoft' on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.**