

Press release: Great British Coast benefits from record government investment

- Over £250 million expected to be invested into the British coastline by 2020
- To date, grants worth £173 million have been allocated to hundreds of coastal sites
- 16 new winning bids for the Coastal Communities Fund to be announced later this summer

Research reveals multi-million pound government funding for coastal communities has created over 7,000 jobs and boosted visitor numbers to the coastline by thousands.

Through the [Coastal Communities Fund](#), almost 300 coastal sites across the UK have been saved, created or improved for future generations. It is expected that every £1 spent from the Fund will generate £8 for local communities.

Sites like Perch Rock Lighthouse in Merseyside, an art deco lido in Penzance and a new Heritage Quarter in Bognor Regis have been allocated grants worth over £173 million since 2012. Around £48 million has also been directly invested in the regeneration of 45 “at risk” coastal heritage sites.

With record levels of investment in coastal communities, coastal tourism has regained its position as England’s largest holiday sector – employing more people than the motor, aerospace, pharmaceutical or steel industries.

Latest research also shows that the summer heatwave is providing a major boost for the country’s seaside towns and villages – 55% of people in the UK are flocking to Britain’s beaches at least once this year. Last year, nearly 17 million trips were taken by British residents to the English seaside – comfortably making it the most popular UK destination.

Secretary of State for Communities, the Rt. Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

From Penzance to Whitley Bay, we’re investing £264 million into our coastal communities by the end of the decade. By 2020 we’ll have invested more funds directly into coastal regeneration than any other government in history.

We’re delivering on our pledge to not only protect our coastal heritage sites for the future generations, but also help to create jobs, promote tourism and deliver a bright future for our coastal regions.

The Northern Powerhouse has benefitted the most to date from the fund. Collectively, the region has seen investment of over £57 million (or 43% of the total) in 51 projects.

The news comes ahead of the announcement of the government's Coastal Communities Fund 'fast track' winners later this summer. These include 16 'shovel ready' projects set to receive grants from a further £40 million tranche of government funding to get underway this financial year.

Deborah Lamb, Deputy Chief Executive of Historic England, said:

We welcome news of funding to help save at-risk historic buildings and places in our seaside towns and villages, so that they can be brought back into use for the benefit of local communities.

Restoring local gems can attract investment and help to tackle the deprivation that is a problem in a number of our coastal areas.

There are great examples of restoration projects in our seaside towns, often bringing together the private, public, voluntary and social enterprise sectors. This funding will inspire more.

Some of the heritage projects changing the face of coastal communities in the UK have included:

'Jubilee Pool' Penzance – the largest surviving tidal saltwater lido in the UK

Almost £2 million (£1.95 million) Coastal Communities Funding was used to repair and re-open the Grade II listed art deco 'Jubilee Pool' in Penzance to create an all year round visitor attraction sustaining existing jobs and creating new ones too.

The saltwater pool, renovated to its former art deco splendour, has increased visitor numbers by more than 25,000 per year, created 167 new jobs and new apprenticeships in an area where there was historically low unemployment and acted as a catalyst for wider regeneration in Penzance. Penzance and the Jubilee Pool were later listed as number 14 in a list of 52 places to go in 2017 by the New York Times.

Perch Rock Lighthouse, New Brighton, Merseyside

Perch Rock Lighthouse in New Brighton Merseyside was re-illuminated for the first time in over 40 years in 2016 after £6,000 of Coastal Revival funding was used to revive the decommissioned Grade II listed lighthouse. The local landmark, situated where the river Mersey merges into Liverpool Bay, was restored using solar panels to bring the lights at the top of the lighthouse back to their original form bringing back a key part of New Brighton's heritage.

Bognor Regis Heritage Quarter

A total of £50,000 of Coastal Communities Funding has facilitated the creation of a new Heritage Quarter showcasing the town's key heritage assets. This included breathing new life into the historic pier and revival of the old town as a stylish restaurant quarter. Work is underway to commission public art gateways and the area is more economically prosperous with fewer vacant units and strong plans to redevelop others.

The Maltings, Wells-next-the-Sea, North Norfolk

The Wells Maltings Trust in North Norfolk received a £610,000 grant to transform a dilapidated 19th century maltings building in Wells-next-the-Sea into an arts, heritage and learning space with auditorium, café and tourist information provision.

The project, nearing completion and set to open in September 2018, will have created 95 jobs, opportunities for 100 new vocational trainees and 6 apprenticeships while supporting 245 businesses. It's expected to increase visitor numbers by more than 42,000 and generate £2.3 million in new visitor expenditure.

The Spanish City Dome, Whitley Bay, North Tyneside

Once an architectural icon and a major tourist attraction for North Tyneside in the 1930s, the Spanish City Dome had fallen into a state of repair in recent years.

Awarded a £2 million grant in 2013 towards the cost of its restoration, the striking Grade II listed building has been subject to a transformative restoration project creating 69 jobs and supporting 8 private sector businesses. Reinstated to its former glory, the Spanish City Dome is set to increase visitor numbers by 140,000 and visitor spend by £3 million annually. It was reopened in July 2018.

Scarborough Market Hall, East Yorkshire

Scarborough received a £2.78 million grant in 2015 to boost the town's economic performance. Through the re-development and modernisation of its historic market hall to provide a vibrant 21st century workspace for Scarborough's artisan movement and local producers, the project created 30 new business spaces and 60 new jobs.

A 'virtual market' concept is being used to promote local producers to a wider regional and national market through an online market intelligence system to ensure the sustainability of local businesses and enhance their contribution to sustainable economic growth. Dubbed the 'Covent Garden of the North' the modernised Scarborough Market Hall is also hosting regular cultural and music events as an important all year, all weather visitor attraction. The renovated building and vaults won a prestigious RIBA award for architectural excellence in May 2018.

Figures show that Scarborough and Blackpool were the top 2 most visited English cities outside of London by British residents over 2014 to 2016.

‘LightPool’ Project and Blackpool Winter Gardens

Blackpool City Council received a £2 million grant in January 2015 towards the ‘LightPool’ project to deliver a radical transformation of the iconic annual Blackpool Illuminations, creating a compelling new visitor experience and a major boost to the local economy. The project is forecast to have increased visitor numbers by 2.6 million.

Blackpool Winter Gardens – a £50,000 grant was match funded towards a £230,000 scheme to carry out emergency stabilisation and repair works to the walls of the Pavilion Theatre within the Grade II* Winter Gardens building. The external fabric is now weather tight and it is the first step in a home for the new “Blackpool Museum of Popular Culture”.

Over £1 million of Coastal Communities Funding has been used to establish 146 Coastal Community Teams around the English coast. These Coastal Community Teams have developed economic plans setting out both the short and longer term priorities to enable their area to promote economic growth.

Now in its fifth round, the Coastal Communities Fund supports the development of UK coastal communities by giving funding towards projects intended to create sustainable economic growth and jobs.

By 2020 the £264 million awarded by the Coastal Communities Fund is expected to have attracted around £369 million in additional funding for coastal projects giving a total investment of around £633 million.

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