

Southend-on-sea SPONGE 2020 Pilot: City Beach



Summary

Through the SPONGE2020 project, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is creating an environmentally friendly and visually appealing area in Southend that will improve drainage, reduce the potential impact of climate change and act as a vibrant community space.

The opportunity

Southend-on-Sea is a seaside town on the north side of the Thames Estuary. It attracts around 7 million visitors annually. Many of these visitors come to enjoy the 7 miles (12km) of sandy beaches and world famous pier. City Beach, to the east of Southend Pier, has a high volume of pedestrian activity. Cafes, kiosks and restaurants line this area of the seafront, in between arcades, pubs, Adventure Island theme park and Sea Life Adventure aquarium.

As part of the SPONGE2020 project, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will be introducing SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) at City Beach, Marine Parade (see Figure 1). The site has been chosen to demonstrate how SuDS can be retrofitted into existing landscape features. It will also show what climate change adaptation measures it is possible to implement in Southend, as well as provide a potential residential solution to rainwater run-off.

There is also an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures with residents, local businesses, schools and youth organisations.

What are we doing?

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has used insight from residents, local businesses and visitors to the seafront to design a scheme at City Beach that best meets their needs.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will be retrofitting SuDS into four existing planted areas at City Beach (see Visual 1). This pilot scheme will consist of crates placed beneath the flower beds to capture and attenuate peak flows from events that would normally overwhelm traditional drainage. The flower beds will act as rain gardens by absorbing rainwater and slowing flows into the crates (see Visual 2).

The drainage scheme has been designed to complement and enhance the existing biodiversity and unique character of the seafront area. The existing trees within this area will be retained as they are already well-established. This area will be filled with formal and bushy shrub planting and coastal dry grass planting. All plants will be dry and coastal tolerant as Southend is one of the driest areas in England. The planters will enhance the appearance of the seafront area.

This pilot scheme has been designed by AECOM and construction work will begin in September 2019. It is due to be completed in Spring 2020. These works are being carried out on behalf of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council by Eurovia, working in close partnership with Anglian Water and the Environment



Agency.

Stakeholder Engagement

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is aiming to engage residents and local businesses to build local awareness and support for SPONGE2020, and demonstrate the Council’s proactive approach to implementing its own climate change solutions. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is also aiming to work

Urban green-blue grids

with schools and youth organisations to raise awareness of SuDS and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Stakeholder mapping has identified the key stakeholders to engage with.

At the start of the SPONGE2020 project, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council launched the website www.southendsponge2020.co.uk to emphasise why the project is important and how interested parties can get involved.

The City Beach site will be used as a 'living classroom' with display boards encouraging individuals and organisations to adopt SuDS and climate change mitigation measures on their properties and premises, as well as in their day-to-day lives.

Local schools and youth groups will be provided with information about the SPONGE2020 project and its purpose, as well as information about SuDS and climate change adaptation solutions.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will issue letters to keep local businesses and residents directly affected by the development of SuDS at City Beach informed of construction works.