



Brightlingsea
Harbour
Commissioners



**BRIGHTLINGSEA
TOWN COUNCIL**

Strategic Appraisal, Access improvements in Brightlingsea



| Final 1.0 |

| Reference Number: 2021-02-10 BTC |

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Exo Environmental Ltd
The Enterprise Centre
University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ

Telephone: 0330 80 80 377
Email: enquiries@exo-env.co.uk
Website: <http://exo-env.co.uk>

Client

Brightlingsea Town Council
Cllr John Carr

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners
James Thomas, Harbour Master

Authors

William Coulet MSc, BSc, MCIWEM
David Miko MChem

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William Coulet
Director



Cover photo: Aerial image of the Harbour from above the proposed heritage pier location

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Brightlingsea is an internationally important site of maritime heritage and culture as a Roman fishing settlement for the town of Colchester (Camulodunum), a Cinque Port (Norman), Napoleonic defences as well as the rich fishing heritage (oysters). Furthermore, it was the site of HMS Nemo and Batemans ROC observation tower in WW2 as well as a characterful Victorian seaside town.

Assets include Grade II listed Norman, Napoleonic and Victorian buildings, marine vessels, Smacks and Barges. Many of the historic Smacks and barges are moored in the Council owned Smack Dock, the dock is unsuitable for visitor access and viewing, especially during COVID19. These vessels also rely on the accessibility of a narrow community floating causeway where commercial operators, visitors and the wider community interacts, a logistical hurdle even when social distancing is not required.

The rich heritage makes the town a major destination for tourists, especially in the summer season. The harbour organised ferry and harbour tours also add a popular activity and enable visitors to come from St Osyth, where a major holiday village (Orchards) is situated. The use of the ferry requires visitors to board on a steep shingle beach, which is completely unsuitable for people with reduced mobility such as wheelchair or pram users.

It is therefore our intention to significantly improve accessibility of Brightlingsea to visitors regardless of their mobility limitations or current COVID19 restrictions. This will be done by building a new landing stage on the St Osyth side of the Brightlingsea Creek, matching the level of access provided to foot ferry customers by the Town Jetty. The project will also unify and link the heritage assets by adapting a section of the Town Hard into an open-air heritage museum and cultural activity hub at the heart of the Harbour, consisting of a heritage pier and quay. Both these actions will provide a long term and sustainable resilient heritage and tourist ecosystem, supporting the local economy and vastly improving visitor accessibility and experience.

Please note that all reference to St. Oysth and Ferry Landing Stage is for information only and does not form part of this application.



Figure 1. Overview map of Brightlingsea Creek. Red box = Landing stage development site (Not forming part of this application). Green box= Heritage pier development site (Source: magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx Accessed: 18/08/2020).

2 Marine Policy Statement

The development area falls within the South East Marine Plan area as shown below.



Figure 2. Marine plan areas with the project site shown by the red rectangle. (Source: www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-plan-areas-in-england accessed on 18/08/20)

The marine plan for the South East (number 5 in Figure 2) location is in development www.gov.uk/government/collections/south-east-marine-plan www.gov.uk/government/collections/east-marine-plans, accessed on 18/08/20).

Therefore, detailed considerations should be based on Marine Policy Statement (DEFRA, 2011). The overarching Marine Policy Statement includes the high-level objectives which constitute of the following main categories:

- Economic
- Social
- Environmental
- Political
- Evidence-based

The following sections focus on the economic, social and environmental impacts and are all based on Exo Environmental documentation supplied with this application which stems from the most up-to-date scientific knowledge as well as local stakeholder engagement programme.