

FORESHORE RAMP SITE INVESTIGATIONS

ABSTRACT

Technical review of Arun District Council ramps to assess, inform and facilitate future development of access arrangements on the Arun coastline.

Arun District Council, Coastal Engineers and Flood Prevention

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1 Executive Summary

Following the work carried out by the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party (BRBAWP) and the recommendations to the Environment Committee 27 February 2023 this report summarises the progression of the agreed actions and survey findings.

This report is aimed at satisfying the actions of Objectives 4 and 5 shown in the Objectives table and the specific short-term actions numbered 1 -4 set out below (Section 3).

2 Background

Many people who would like to access the beach at Bognor Regis, either to be close to the sea or to be able to access to swim, are unable to do so because of the challenges presented by the natural environment and the existing access limitations.

Improving Beach Access has been an ongoing challenge For Arun District Council. The Beach Access Working Party was set up by the Environment Committee and reported recommendations to the Committee on 27 February 2023. Those recommendations are set out below under section 3.

The work undertaken by the working party and Arun District Council officers has established that the council is not alone in its desire to improve beach access for all. The evidence collected demonstrates that there are several authorities who are working towards a similar goal and there is increasing demand for access to the beach within the Sussex Bay.

The work on improving Beach access work will continue to be ongoing and the delivery of several small actions will begin to make an incremental difference. Arun District Council must continue our journey exploring how we can improve the visitor experience and possibly expand our horizons to work with neighbouring authorities.

3 Objectives

The following objectives were established by the Working Party and accepted as recommendations by the Environment and Climate Change Committee.

1	Establish and engage with a user / stakeholder group.			
2	Apply the latest national guidance for equality of access to the natural environment.			
3	Establish a vision statement and clear project critical success factors / objectives such as what does success look like?			
4	Review seafront amenities and access in conjunction with the solution, such a disabled parking, toilet and changing facilities.			
5	Utilise existing assets where possible coupled with a combination of smaller interventions for 'least restrictive access'.			

With the establishment of the above overall recommendations a number of more specific short to long-term objectives are proposed.

The **short-term** steps:

- 1. Undertake project specific inspections and surveys of existing structures / ramps suitable for possible improvement / repurposing.
- Clear identified ramps of shingle and maintain for the summer season. Produce a financial proposal to clear identified ramps of shingle and maintain them for the 2023 summer season.
- 3. Seek feedback from, and visits to, working examples of good practice. This to include further research into the use of wheelchair accessible facilities such as those at Brighton and Hove Council.
- 4. Review potential funding sources to inform budget/match-funding requirements.

In addition to the short-term steps the following **medium-term** and **long-term** steps are proposed:

- 1. Monitor the use of existing ramps over the 2023 summer season.
- 2. Following the survey of existing structures / ramps establish a project to adapt / repurpose an existing ramp. In addition, include the implementation of any amenity modifications, such as disabled parking bays.
- 3. As part of the above work undertake a Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) / Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) safety audit on modified assets if required.
- 4. Identify funding sources for specific projects, whether capital projects or smaller scale, and draft supporting business case/s.
- 5. Following the above steps deliver a matting and decking solution in suitable locations.
- 6. Undertake a capital project proposal, such as repurposing an existing ramp, to deliver a beach access project.
- 7. If funding proposals are successful, implement capital project/s, and undertake an ongoing monitoring plan.

4 Desk Study & Site Investigations

This report addresses the actions of Objectives 4 and 5 shown in the Objectives table and the specific short-term actions numbered 1 -4.

The study area had been previously agreed by the working party and encompasses the beach and foreshore that resides between Culver Road, Felpham and Nyewood Lane, Aldwick. The only exception to this is a small piece of frontage between Outram Road and Gloucester Road where the Environment Agency are the operating authority, see Figure 1 - Study Area.

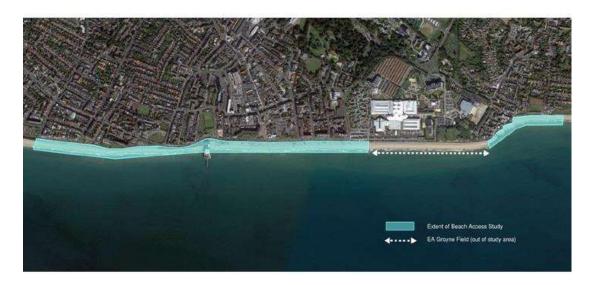


Figure 1 - Study Area

The initial piece of work required Arun District Council Engineers to review, collate and evaluate all ramps which could potentially increase accessibility to the lower foreshore. It was concluded that the most appropriate approach was to consider all known ramps to ensure assets were not dismissed prematurely. The ramps that could play a role in facilitating beach access have been highlighted and numbered below - See Figure 2.

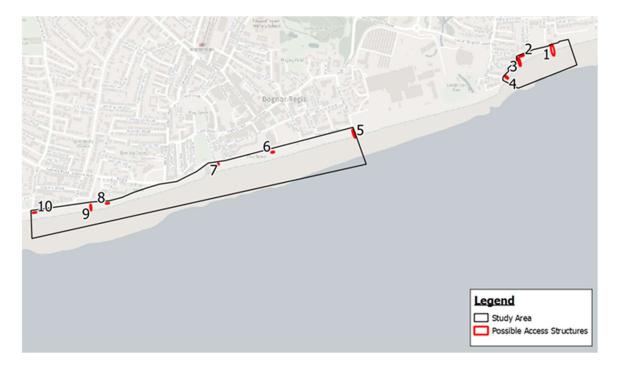


Figure 2 - Map showing where existing ramps may be present

Each ramp was then evaluated using a relatively simple matrix so that the council are able to focus its resources on the ramps that provide the largest benefit to the public. Table 11 on page 15 sets out the information that was collected. The ramps are currently utilised for a variety of activities and the

assessment gives appropriate consideration to current use, technical challenges and the visitor experience. The approach provides a holistic view of our ramps and assess the sites independently and collectively.

4.1 Site 1 - Blakes Road / Felpham Sailing Club



Figure 3 - Historic photographs of Blakes Road

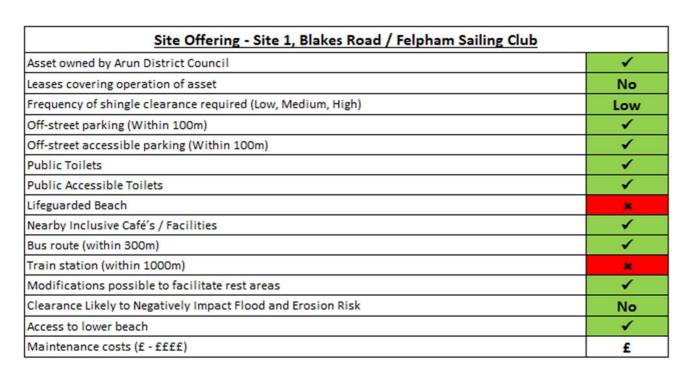






Figure 4 - Blakes Road, May 2023

The ramp and facilities at Blakes Road are the best offering within the study area. The ramp is generally clear with direct access to the lower foreshore and benefits from accessible parking, toilets, and a café within a 75m radius. The facilities are good quality with the toilets and carpark having been upgraded in the last 5 years. It is one of the few ramps that could foreseeably accommodate modifications, such as resting areas, to make the offering more user friendly.

The main drawback of this location is that access using public transport is limited to taxi's and buses. However, the route to the nearest bus stop is generally flat and over half of the distance (170m) is covered on the promenade. The other major consideration is that the ramp is known to be utilised by Felpham Sailing Club but through appropriate engagement it is envisaged that this can be managed appropriately.

4.2 Site 2 – Canning Road / The Lobster Pot (old ramp)

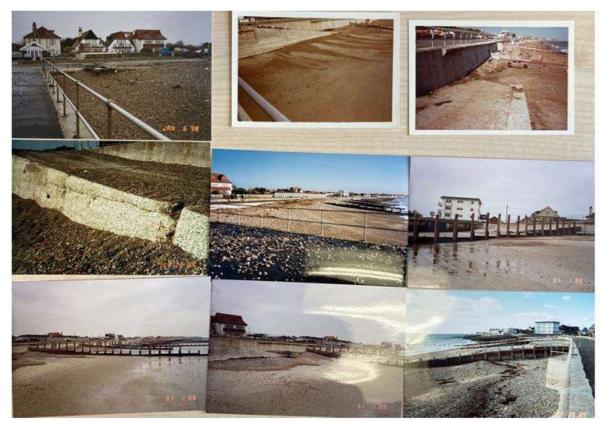


Figure 5 - Historic photographs Canning Road (Old Ramp)

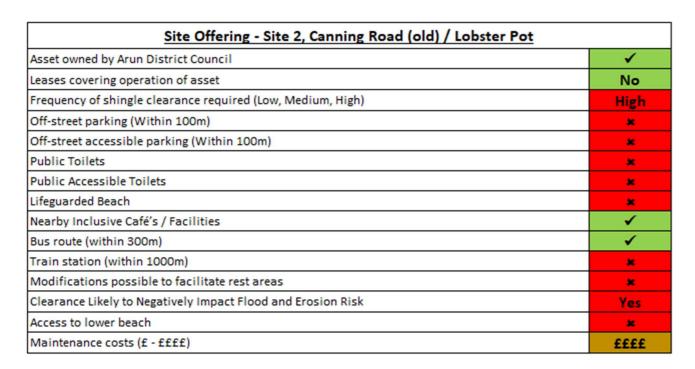




Figure 6 - Canning Road (Old Ramp), September 2019

The volume of beach sediment at site 2 is such that it would not be viable to consider resurrecting this ramp.

Removal of the shingle from this location is not advised as the shingle beach provides protection to the seawall, property and infrastructure. The condition of the seawall in unknown and the historic images show superficial damage in 1989. They also show that by 1998 the face of wall had been completely covered by beach sediment and we can therefore determine that the condition has not been assessed in 25 - 34 years.

Removal of beach sediment from this location has the possibility of increasing coastal flooding and erosion risk.

Historic images not available due to the age of ramp



Site Offering - Site 3, Canning Road (new) / Lobster Pot				
Asset owned by Arun District Council	✓			
Leases covering operation of asset	No			
Frequency of shingle clearance required (Low, Medium, High)	High			
Off-street parking (Within 100m)	×			
Off-street accessible parking (Within 100m)	31			
Public Toilets	*			
Public Accessible Toilets	20			
Lifeguarded Beach	38			
Nearby Inclusive Café's / Facilities	✓			
Bus route (within 300m)	✓			
Train station (within 1000m)	20			
Modifications possible to facilitate rest areas	✓			
Clearance Likely to Negatively Impact Flood and Erosion Risk	No			
Access to lower beach	✓			
Maintenance costs (£ - ££££)	£££			





Figure 8 – Canning Road / Lobster Pot (Newer ramp), May 2023

Site 3 benefits from many of the same amenities as site 1, albeit further away – Toilets and parking are approximately 200m away.

The major drawback to this location is the frequency of shingle clearance required. As the ramp is located on the junction of a stepped bay it is frequently overtopped with beach sediment due to the longshore transport regime. Furthermore, due to being situated further landward with respect to the foreshore it is also subjected to sediment inundation during drift reversal events (south-easterly, easterly and north easterly waves). For these reasons it would not be economically viable to select this ramp as a preferred options.

However, it would be prudent to consider that this ramp may be able to be cleared 'when time permits' during major shingle clearance operations. For this reason, this ramp could be cleared on an ad-hoc basis.

4.4 Site 4 - Outram Road

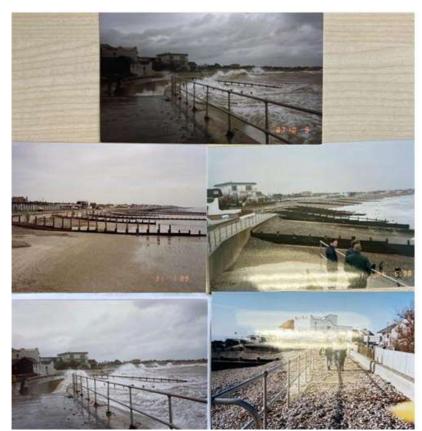


Figure 9 - Historic photographs of Outram Road

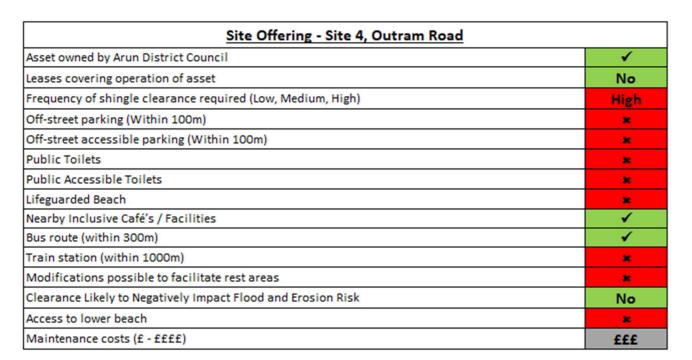






Figure 10 - Outram Road, May 2023

Site 4 does not meet the objectives of the project and is remote by comparison. Access to the ramp itself is more difficult than many of the other offerings and has therefore not been shortlisted.

Considerations ruling out shortlisting include; the inability to access the lower foreshore, the remoteness of the ramp, costs associated with regular clearance, the lack of facilities, the lack of general access and the risk of entrapment.

4.5 Site 5 - Gloucester Road





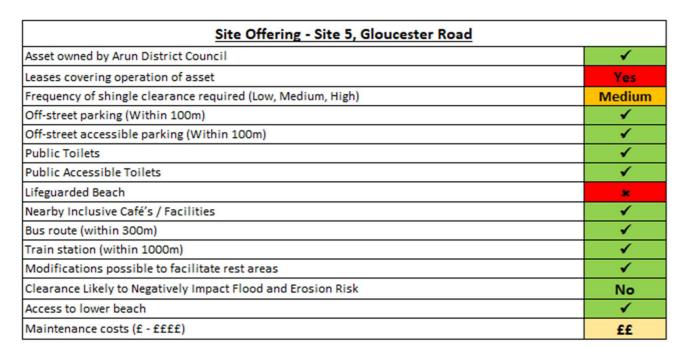






Figure 12 - Gloucester Road, May 2023

Site 5 is another preferred site and benefits from accessible parking, public toilets and cafes within a 125m radius. It is also located in fairly close proximity to the town centre giving access to a plethora of shops, café's and activities.

The main drawback of site 5 is that it has contractual challenges and historic use expectations that need to be overcome. expectations based on historic use. These will need to be overcome before Arun District Council are able to begin improving the offering. Additionally, access between the accessible parking and offering has a more challenging route consisting of either; narrow paths and ramps or, being situated an extended distance from the asset. This asset would benefit from upgrading the access chain, specifically, the access route between the parking and offering.

4.6 Site 6 – Regis Centre

No Images or Drawings Available







Figure 14 - Regis Centre, Sept 2019

There was thought to be a ramp running parallel to the sea wall opposite the Place St. Maur crossing. However, we were unable to find historical drawings or photographs to supported this.

Shortlisted - No
Table 6 - Site 6, Assessment Matrix

4.7 Site 7 – Warterloo Square (Locally known as the Fisherman's Ramp)

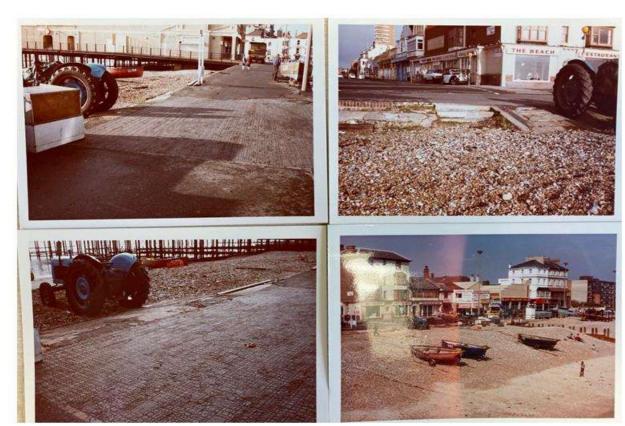
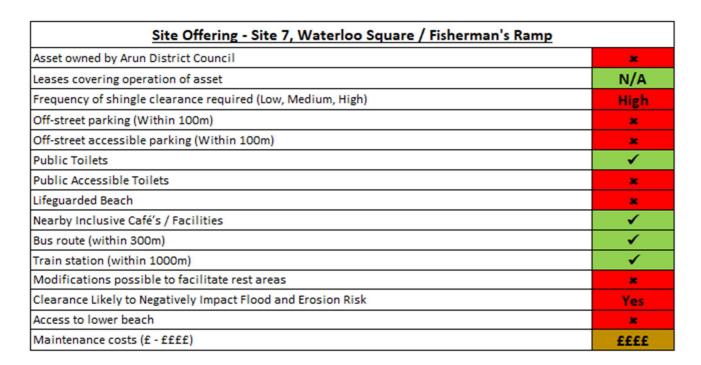


Figure 15 - Historic Photographs of Waterloo Square



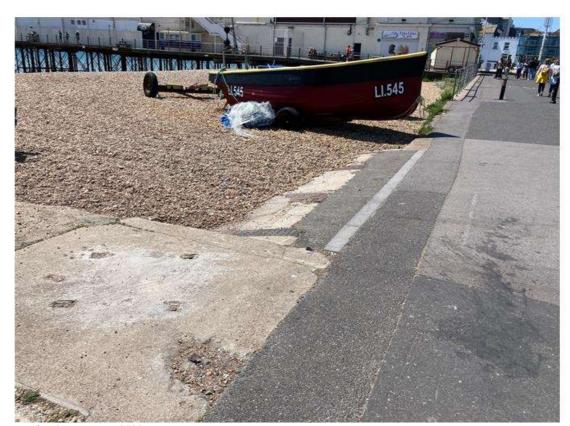


Figure 16 - Waterloo Square, May 2023

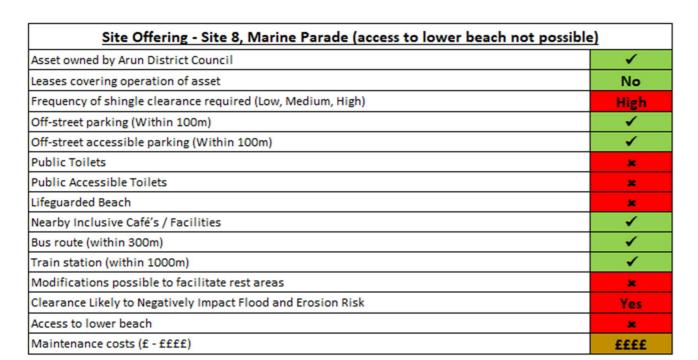
Site 7 scores low on the assessment matrix due to its location, lack of facilities and position relative to the foreshore. Further investigation is not recommended as there are far better offerings within 1km of this ramp.

4.8 Site 8 – Marine Parade





Figure 17- Historic Photographs of Marine Parade



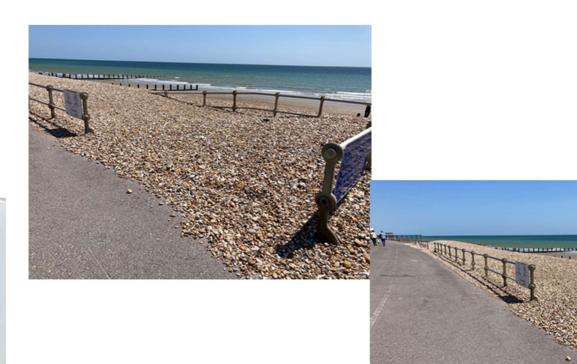


Figure 18 - Marine Parade, May 2023

Site 8 has not be shortlisted as it does not meet the objectives agreed by the working party.

The ramp terminates above the sand level and appears to have spending steps for a portion of the journey to the lower foreshore, see Figure 17. Additionally, the ramp is inundated with beach sediment and removal of the material will increase flood and erosion risk.

4.9 Site 9 - Victoria Road South (Bognor Regis Sailing Club Ramp)











Figure 19 - Historic Photographs of Victoria Road South (Before 2014 refurbishment)

Site Offering - Site 9, Victoria Road South / Bognor Regis Sailing Club				
Asset owned by Arun District Council	×			
Leases covering operation of asset	N/A			
Frequency of shingle clearance required (Low, Medium, High)	Medium			
Off-street parking (Within 100m)	20			
Off-street accessible parking (Within 100m)	×			
Public Toilets	20			
Public Accessible Toilets	30			
Lifeguarded Beach	30			
Nearby Inclusive Café's / Facilities	20			
Bus route (within 300m)	✓			
Train station (within 1000m)	✓			
Modifications possible to facilitate rest areas	✓			
Clearance Likely to Negatively Impact Flood and Erosion Risk	No			
Access to lower beach	×			
Maintenance costs (£ - ££££)	££			

Figure 20 Victoria Road South, May 2023 and Sept 2019

Site 9 has not be shortlisted as it does not meet the objectives agreed by the working party, specifically it does not extend to the lower foreshore.

One major benefit of this ramp is its seaward position relative to the foreshore. However, clearance of this ramp as part of this project would not meet the objectives.

4.10 Site 10 - Nyewood Lane (The Waverley Pub)



Figure 21 Historic Photographs, Nyewood Lane

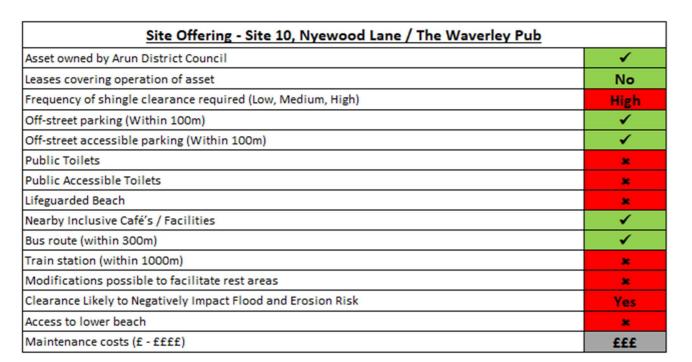






Figure 22 - Nyewood Lane, May 2023 and Sept 2019

Site 10 has not be shortlisted as it does not meet the objectives agreed by the working party.

Desk studies and site surveys were unable to verify the exact design of the ramp but it is believed to be similar in construction to that of the ramp at site 8. Furthermore, removal of sediment from this piece of foreshore would significantly increase flood and erosion risk.

4.11 All Sites, Shortlisting Table

Site Offering / Site No	Site 1, Blakes Road	Site 2, Canning Road (Old)	Site 3, Canning Road (New)	Site 4, Outram Road	Site 5, Gloucester Road	Site 6, Regis Centre	Site 7, Waterloo Square	Site 8, Marine Parade	Site 9, Bognor Regis Sailing Club	Site 10, Nyewood Lane
Asset owned by Arun District Council	✓	1	✓	1	1	✓	×	1	×	✓
Leases covering operation of asset	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	N/A	No
Frequency of shingle clearance required (Low, Medium, High)	Low	High	High	High	Medium	High	High	High	Medium	High
Off-street parking (Within 100m)	1	×	×	×	1	✓	×	1	×	✓
Off-street accessible parking (Within 100m)	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	1	×	✓
Public Toilets	✓	×	x	×	1	✓	✓	×	×	×
Public Accessible Toilets	1	×	x	×	1	1	×	×	×	×
Lifeguarded Beach	×	×	×	*	×	✓	×	×	*	×
Nearby Inclusive Café's / Facilities	✓	✓	✓.	1	1	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Bus route (within 300m)		1	✓	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Train station (within 1000m)	×	×	×	*	1	1	✓	✓	1	×
Modifications possible to facilitate rest areas	1	×	✓	×	1	×	×	×	1	×
Clearance Likely to Negatively Impact Flood and Erosion Risk	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Access to lower beach	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Maintenance costs (£ - ££££)	£	££££	£££	£££	££	££££	££££	££££	££	£££
Shortlisted	✓	×	×	×	1	×	×	×	*	×

Table 11- All Sites, Assessment Matrix

5 Shortlisted Ramps

The high-level review has identified that Site 1, Blakes Road and Site 5, Gloucester Road, meet enough criteria to warrant shortlisting. Analysis of each site is shown below.

5.1 Site 1, Blakes Road, Felpham

The offering at Blakes Road is most favourable offering within the study area. The ramp is generally clear with direct access to the lower foreshore and benefits from accessible parking, toilets, and a café within a 75m radius. The design of the asset is such that adaptations could be made to improve the standard of the offering.

5.1.1 Pro's

- The ramp is positioned seaward of the foreshore and remains clear of shingle for much of the year.
- It has high quality supporting infrastructure within a 75m radius:
 - Accessible parking
 - o Accessible toilets
 - Accessible café's
- There are limited shared use concerns
- There are no contractual obligations covering the use of the ramp

5.1.2 Con's

- Not central to Bognor Regis
- Approximately 1.6 km's to the nearest train station
- Approximately 1.4 km's to Bognor Regis town centre

5.2 Site 5, Gloucester Road, Bognor Regis

The offering at Gloucester Road is also a favourable asset that could undergo adaptations to improve the offering. The ramp is set further into the beach than that of Blakes Road and will therefore require increased clearance.

5.2.1 Pro's

- Central to Bognor Regis
- Within 1 km of the train station
- Within 600m of the town centre
- Close to the foreshore office
- Adjacent to the lifeguarded beach

5.2.2 Con's

- A local business has a lease that includes an <u>option</u> to run the ramp as a concession facilitating water sports and launching Personal Watercraft (PWC's {Jet ski's}). Detailed discussion will need to be had with the lessee to identify how mixed use will be managed.
- The route between the accessible parking and the asset is challenging and may require improvement.
- The ramp will require more frequent clearance as the asset is set landward of the beach face.

5.3 Ramp Clearance Framework

The ramps shall be cleared in accordance with the framework set out below:

Framework No.	Site Observation	Activity required
1	Ramp free from sediment (Shingle & Sand)	No activity required
2	A navigable path more than 1.5m width from the top of the ramp to the bottom of the ramp (Not necessarily in a straight line)	No activity required
3	Small amounts of sediment that can be dealt with by brushing – Assessed by Arun DC officer	Foreshore team to sweep the ramp
4	Small amounts of sediment that can be removed using hand tools to create a 1.5m wide navigable path - assessed by Arun DC officer as requiring less than 1 hrs work.	ADC operative to clear as necessary
5	Significant quantities of sediment covering the ramp – assessed by Arun DC officer.	ADC to instruct clearance by nominated contractor

5.4 Visual Survey Results

It was agreed that a visual survey was to be undertaken following the clearance of the ramps in 2023. The survey consisted of four daily inspections at 10:00, 12:00, 14:00 and 16:00. The ramp at Blakes Road was monitored for 36 working days (7 weeks) and the ramp at Gloucester Road was monitored for 16 working days (3 weeks).

When comparing the results for the same period there was little meaningful analysis that could be drawn due to the minor differences in use. Both ramps proved to be popular with the visual surveys concluding;

- 1,803 documented uses
- 285 uses by people with mobility aids.
- 326 uses by people for recreational water sports
- 253 uses by families with pushchairs
- 125 uses by older adults

The full results can be found in the document attached to this report.

6 Future Development Opportunities and Challenges

Within the context of the current offerings both Site 1, Blakes Road, and Site 5, Gloucester Road, could accommodate alterations to improve the overall site experience. The challenges associated with alterations have been laid out below:

6.1 Challenges

6.1.1 Marine Licensing

Alterations are likely to need a license from the Marine Management Organization (MMO).
 The MMO aim to determine 90% of applications within 13 weeks of validation but depending on the complexity of the case, some applications may take longer.

- MMO applications which require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) also require a minimum of 6 weeks consultation. The MMO offer an EIA screening assessment which can be determined before the submission of a marine licence. It is recommended that screening assessments are sought when pursuing alterations.

6.1.2 Leases

- Site 5, Gloucester Road, is covered by a lease which encompasses an **option** for the lessee to run the ramp as a concession. It is not an exclusive right, nor is it an obligation.
- Alterations that extend east at Site 5, Gloucester Road, will interact with an area that is managed by the Environment Agency.
- Arun District Council do not hold a record of a lease covering the use of Site 1, Blakes Road. Further consultation is required with Felpham Sailing Club to explore if a collaborative solution can be established.

6.1.3 Resources

 To carry out any improvements to the ramps for access the council will need to commit resources to a project. A project proposal will need to be worked up outlining the work required to include any staff / consultant and capital costs together with any revenue implications. Potential sources of funding are identified below.

6.2 Opportunities for Improvement

As part of the medium / long term steps opportunities to improve the ramps for access has been reviewed. The following improvements have been identified:

- Handrails. The Coastal Engineer will need to seek further advice on the installation of handrails as the introduction of tidally submerged obstructions is not well documented.
- Resting platform/s adjacent to the ramp so that the slope can be tackled by users in stages.
- Re-surfacing to improve access for users. Re-surfacing is possible but it is unlikely to remain smooth for an extended period of time.

7 Potential Funding Sources

Discussions with members, neighbouring authorities and residents have identified additional funding and engagement opportunities. Funding opportunities that require further consideration include:

- West Sussex County Council Funding
- Bognor Regis Town Council funding
- Local Businesses
- Sport England Small Grant Programme
- National Lottery Awards for All England
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund, UKSPF