

# Arun District Council

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| <b>REPORT TO:</b>  | <b>Economy Committee 16/04/24</b>  |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>  | <b>Additional Beach Huts</b>   |
| <b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>   | <b>Karl Roberts, Director of Growth &amp; Interim Joint Chief Executive</b>  |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>  | Councillor Roger Nash, Chair of Economy Committee  |
| <b>WARDS:</b>  | <b>Pagham, Aldwick West, Aldwick East, Marine, Hotham, Felpham West, Felpham East, Middleton-On-Sea, Yapton, River, Beach, Rustington West, Rustington East, East Preston, Ferring</b> |
| <b>CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:</b><br>To consult on the provision of additional beach huts in the Arun District will support the Council's Vision in respect of fulfilling Arun's economic potential. Encouraging the development of the district as a key tourist destination, supporting and enabling improvements and activities to increase visitor spend. |  |
| <b>DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:</b><br>This report is produced by the Property, Estates, and Facilities Manager and follows from the Provision of additional Beach Huts in Arun District Progress Report, presented to the Economy Committee in November 2022.  |  |
| <b>FINANCIAL SUMMARY:</b><br>The recommendations of this report have no direct financial implications. If viable sites are brought forward and delivered, this will be supported by business case to ensure any scheme is financially sustainable.   |  |

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update members on any potentially viable sites for new beach hut installations.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee give their approval for officers to:

- 2.1. Undertake a focussed market research exercise by surveying the Councils beach hut waiting list to establish market interest in the following prioritised sites:
  - a) Bognor Regis Promenade (rear of prom) between Gloucester Road and Longbrook Park
  - b) Longbrook Park
  - c) Overstrand Avenue greensward
  - d) South Strand shingle beach
  - e) West Kingston shingle beach and greensward
  - f) Ferring Rife to Sea Lane greensward

- 2.2. Explore potential for introducing beach huts on the putting green at Marine Park Gardens.
- 2.3. Complete legal due diligence on the above sites prioritised in accordance with the market survey response.
- 2.4. Undertake public consultation on the proposed sites.
- 2.5. Report back to Committee with the findings of the focused market research, public consultation and legal due diligence, with draft scheme layouts and outline business cases for those sites considered viable.

### **3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 3.1. To consider identified opportunities to introduce additional beach huts in the district.

### **4. DETAIL**

- 4.1. Following previous reports to committee on the subject of beach huts, officers have been working to identify any potentially viable sites for new beach hut installations.
- 4.2. An appraisal of Arun District Councils owned coastline and foreshore sites has been undertaken, including consultation with the Councils coastal engineers, planners, ecologist, Parks & Greenspace and solicitors.
- 4.3. A tabulated summary of the study can be found appended to this report, along with a graphical representation of the Arun coastline which shows an overall position in terms of viability. All are subject to full title review.
- 4.4. Sites considered to be potentially viable following the study are as follows, and it is from this list that the recommended shortlist at 2.1 is generated:
  - 4.4.1. Bognor Regis Promenade (shingle) between Pier and Alexandra Theatre  
Although potentially viable from a practical perspective, beach huts in this area may have a negative aesthetic impact on this busy and popular section of beach, and would not be in keeping with the intended zoning of the Bognor Regis Seafront Delivery Plan. This site is therefore not included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 1.**

4.4.2. Bognor Regis Promenade (shingle) between Albert Road and Gloucester Road

Although potentially viable from a practical perspective, beach huts in this area may have a negative aesthetic impact on this busy and popular section of beach, and would not be in keeping with the intended zoning of the Bognor Regis Seafront Delivery Plan. This site is therefore not included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 2.**

4.4.3. Bognor Regis Promenade (rear of prom) between Gloucester Road and Longbrook Park

This section of promenade is wide and beach huts could be accommodated at the rear of the promenade against the boundary with Butlins. This site is therefore included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 3.**

4.4.4. Longbrook Park, Felpham

Arun District Council does not own the shingle beach in this area, and the promenade may not be wide enough to accommodate beach huts. However, there is potential to site beach huts along the southern edge of Longbrook Park. This site is therefore included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 4.**

4.4.5. Blakes Road and Culver Road greensward areas, Felpham

The assessment of this area is positive, however the greenswards already accommodate beach huts at a relatively high density. Although the shingle beach could possibly accommodate additional huts, it is not considered appropriate to include this site area in the recommended shortlist at 2.1 due to the existing density of huts on the greensward.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 5.**

4.4.6. Littlehampton Promenade (shingle) between Beach Crescent and Hendon Avenue

The assessment of this area is positive, however the shingle beach already accommodates beach huts at a relatively high density, and the ecological consultation for this area makes reference to "priority habitat".

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 6.**

4.4.7. Overstrand Avenue greensward, Rustington

This site is potentially viable. Although amenities are limited, beach huts in this location may be attractive to the market. This site is therefore included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 7.**

4.4.8. South Strand shingle beach, East Preston

This site is potentially viable. There are privately owned and managed beach huts at the rear of the shingle beach. The shingle beach in front of Pattersons Walk Community Toilet is stable and amenities are fair. Additional beach huts at this location may compliment the existing huts, and may be attractive to the market. This site is therefore included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 8.**

4.4.9. West Kingston shingle beach and greensward

This site is potentially viable, with huts located either on the shingle beach or the seaward edge of the greensward. Amenities are fair. Additional beach huts at this location may be attractive to the market. This site is therefore included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 9.**

4.4.10. Ferring Rife to Sea Lane greensward, Ferring

This site is potentially viable, with huts located either on the shingle beach or the greensward. Amenities are fair. Additional beach huts at this location may be attractive to the market. This site is therefore included in the recommended shortlist at 2.1.

**Refer to Indicative Site Plan 10.**

4.5. Another site which has not yet been subject to the above assessment is the putting green at Marine Park Gardens, Marine Drive West, Aldwick. This is considered worthy of exploration of its suitability for hosting beach huts.

4.6. Any potentially viable sites are subject to legal due diligence and any necessary consents.

4.7. It is recommended that a focused market research exercise is undertaken by surveying the Councils beach hut waiting list to establish market interest in any potentially viable sites before committing resource and developing schemes.

4.8. Through recent preparation of the delivery of new huts at Littlehampton it is known that the total installed cost per standard hut should be budgeted at £15,000.00, a wheelchair accessible hut should be budgeted at £33,000.00. The annual rent set for new beach hut tenants taking a lease in 2024/25 is £1,214. Officer time in procuring and works to existing infrastructure will also

need to be estimated. An initial assumed mix of 5%-10% wheelchair accessible huts for all new installations therefore suggests that new schemes will break even in the fourteenth year. This high level analysis makes it clear that a more comprehensive business case including borrowing costs and minimum revenue provision needs to be considered.

- 4.9. Recent experience has shown that procurement and delivery of new beach hut schemes is a lengthy process. Carrying out the recommendations of this report and bringing forward any viable schemes is unlikely to see any new huts delivered on site ahead of the 2026 summer season.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1. This study has required engagement with a range of internal service departments, effectively amounting to additional internal consultation.
- 5.2. Ecology:- The Eastern side of the District has the greatest potential for locating huts. Ecological assessment and screening of the huts with complementary planting is advised. If planning permission is required please note Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is also mandatory but guidance is awaited on how these proposed developments would be captured by the BNG regime.
- 5.3. Planning:- It would not be contrary to planning policy to install beach huts at any of the proposed sites per se. Consideration will need to be given to general policies concerning character and landscape, but these are not specific to any location.
- 5.4. Coastal Engineering:- The Coastal Engineers have been engaged throughout the process providing expert analysis on the stability of each section of coastline. The team also provided information on sites that would not be viable due to environmental designations and/or protected flora and fauna. The shortlisted sites contained within this report accord with the assessment and as such the recommendations are supported from a technical perspective. However, as with any asset adjacent to the shoreline there always remains some residual risk in extreme events.
- 5.5. Parks and Greenspace:- Input has been obtained on the proposals from the Greenspace who have highlighted a number of site specific constraints which have been taken account of in developing the recommendations. Their input will continue to be sought as draft scheme layouts are prepared.

## **6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

- 6.1. Do nothing:- This option is not recommended as it would be contrary to the previously expressed wish of this committee, and would not explore the opportunities to support the Council Vision and potential of delivering increases to the Council's income stream.

- 6.2. Propose an alternative selection of sites:- The study presented in this report has identified a list of potentially viable sites for recommendation. Members may amend this list having considered the study.
- 6.3. Include a wider public consultation to establish interest in leasing beach huts in the proposed locations:- The recommendations of this report include targeted consultation with individuals currently on the Councils beach hut waiting list. However, the existing waiting list is held only in respect of existing beach hut locations at Felpham and Littlehampton. A wider public consultation may reach a greater audience and identify markets which are as yet unknown to the Council. This option is not recommended due to the increased resource required.

## **7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 7.1. Market testing costs are within current budgets with a business case / financial viability appraisal to be completed in due course.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1. There is a risk that if market research and legal due diligence is not carried out thoroughly, that the delivery of schemes may be ill informed resulting in inappropriate commitment of resource and/or delivery of an unsustainable scheme.
- 8.2. There is a risk that surveys returned from the Councils beach hut waiting list indicate that there is little or no demand for some or all of the sites proposed at 2.1 of this report.
- 8.3. There is a risk that legal due diligence against any of the sites proposed at 2.1 of this report identifies barriers to delivery – see also Exempt Appendix.
- 8.4. There is a risk that business case appraisals against any or all identified sites do not provide a favourable return on investment.
- 8.5. There is a risk that variable market influences negatively impact the expected viability of any of the sites proposed at 2.1 of this report.
- 8.6. There is a risk that the beach huts could be damaged through overtopping of the shingle beach in an extreme event. With this in mind, we should aim to reduce the length of time to recover our costs as the risk of occurrence slightly increases every year with respect to the base year.

## **9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER**

- 9.1. This is an early stage report and recommendation 2.2 seeks committee approval to carry out legal due diligence. Such due diligence will include an evaluation of each site on whether any existing easements or covenants will prevent a proposal or whether such incumbrances (if any) can be mitigated. Each proposed letting will then need to comply with the disposal of open space requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and any other statutory consents (such as planning permission).

## **10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 10.1. The recommendations of this report can be delivered within existing resource.

## **11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT**

- 11.1. There are no direct health and safety impacts from the proposals in this report. Should any sites progress appropriate health and safety risk assessments and arrangements will be implemented.

## **12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT**

- 12.1. The delivery of this work will be lead by the Property, Estates, and Facilities service, and will require continued input from other Council services. The work required is significant but it is not anticipated that outsourcing will be necessary.
- 12.2. Follow on work for the delivery of any viable sites and the ongoing management of any new beach huts is beyond the scope of this report.

## **13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE**

- 13.1. Consideration has and will continue to be taken as design schemes are developed regarding the entire access chain - parking, toilet provisions, access between the facility and other supporting infrastructure etc. Some modifications to existing infrastructure may be needed and locations that would be best suited to wheelchair accessible huts will be identified as part of the scheme design and business case. Proportion of beach huts to be wheelchair accessible huts will be informed by how the wheelchair accessible beach huts perform at Littlehampton.

## **14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE**

- 14.1. It is not currently thought that the installation of beach huts in the above locations will have negative impacts on emissions produced by the Council. However as mentioned by 5.2 if planning permission is required BNG must be considered. Additionally, before construction goes ahead on the chosen site more consideration should be taken on how construction is undertaken, materials sourced and mitigation measures incorporated.

## **15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 15.1 There are no direct adverse implications for crime and disorder. However, it must be noted that the Council has an obligation to consider the impact on crime and disorder, and public safety, in any development plans.

## **16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT**

- 16.1. Under The Human Rights Act 1998 it is unlawful for the Council to act in a way which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The aim of Human rights is the individual – it is about putting the individual centre stage. This will sometimes mean consulting individuals or groups of individuals before designing services. Individuals are then able to point out how a proposal would affect their dignity, freedom independence etc before the proposal is adopted.

## **17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS**

- 17.1. There are no specific FOI or Data Protection implications arising out of these recommendations.

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### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

**Name:** Sam Horwill

**Job Title:** Property, Estates, and Facilities Manager

**Contact Number:** 01903 737516

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

[November 2022 Beach Hut Progress Report to Economy Committee](#)  
[Bognor Regis Seafront Delivery Plan](#)

Equality Impact Assessment

**Exempt Appendix - Not for publication** Note: This appendix contains exempt information as defined in paragraph no. 3 of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972.