

# Arun District Council

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Economy Committee – 22 October 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Additional Beach Hut Consultations</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nat Slade, Group Head of Technical Services</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Roger Nash, Chair of Economy Committee
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>Marine, Hotham, Felpham West, Beach, Rustington West, East Preston, Ferring</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:</b> Exploring 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. The Council's Financial Strategy adopted by Full Council on 10 January 2024 sets out that in order to reduce its funding gap the Council will review its assets to identify if they can deliver a better financial return.	
<b>DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:</b> This report is produced by the Property, Estates, and Facilities Manager and follows from the Additional Beach Huts Report, presented to the Economy Committee in April 2024.	
<b>FINANCIAL SUMMARY:</b> 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 present feedback following consultation with Ward & Division Councillors, Town Councils, and Parish Councils regarding the ten previously identified potential additional beach hut sites in accordance with resolution of Minute 771 of the Economy Committee 16 April 2024. To seek approval to progress investigations and public consultation on selected sites.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Committee give their approval for officers to:
- 2.2. Halt any further consideration of Sites 1, 2, 5, and 6.
- 2.3. To proceed in exploring the potential for new beach hut installations at Sites 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10. Undertaking full legal due diligence and public consultation. Reporting back to Committee with the findings of the public consultation and legal due diligence, with draft scheme layouts and outline business cases for those sites considered viable.

### 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. Report on consultation with Ward Councillor, Town Councils, and Parish Councils regarding the ten previously proposed additional beach hut sites in accordance with resolution of Minute 771 of the Economy Committee 16 April 2024.

### 4. DETAIL

- 4.1. In April earlier this year the Economy Committee considered a report which presented a high-level appraisal of coastal sites with potential to accommodate new beach hut installations. At minute 771, committee resolved:

*“to undertake Ward Councillor and Town/Parish Council consultations on the proposed ten sites and report back to this Committee with its findings”.*

- 4.2. On 11 July officers contacted all relevant District Ward Members, Town Councils, Parish Councils, and County Division Councillors by email explaining the background and inviting feedback with regard to the ten shortlisted sites. Responses were required no later than 16 August. A copy of the consultation invitation is appended to this report.
- 4.3. Responses received by the requested deadline are listed below, with copy of each written response provided:

Councillor Mark Turner MBE	District Ward Member for Ferring	<a href="#">EXEMPT - Cllr M Turner - District - Ferring</a>
Councillor Jaine Wild	WSCC Division Member for Felpham	<a href="#">Cllr-J-Wild-County-Felphampdf.pdf</a>
Bognor Regis Town Council – Planning and Licensing Committee		<a href="#">Bognor-Regis-Town-Council.pdf</a>
Kingston Parish Council		<a href="#">Kingston-Parish-Council.pdf</a> <a href="#">EPPC-to-KPC.pdf</a>
Ferring Parish Council		<a href="#">Ferring-Parish-Council.pdf</a>
Felpham Parish Council – Planning Committee		<a href="#">Felpham-Parish-Council.pdf</a>
Councillor Alison Bryden Cooper	WSCC Division Member for Rustington	<a href="#">Cllr-A-Cooper-County-Rustington.pdf</a>
Councillor Peggy Partridge	District Ward Member for Rustington West	<a href="#">Cllr-P-Partridge-District-Rustington-West.pdf</a> <a href="#">Cllr-P-Partridge-District-Rustington-West-2.pdf</a>
Rustington Parish Council		<a href="#">Rustington-Parish-Council.pdf</a>

4.4. Two further responses were received after the deadline. Again, these are listed below with copy of each written response provided:

Councillor Lesley-Anne Lloyd	District Ward Member for Rustington West	<a href="#">Cllr-L-A-Lloyd-District-Rustington-West.pdf</a>
Councillor Lynne Edwards	District Ward Member for Rustington West	<a href="#">Cllr-L-Edwards-District-Rustington-West.pdf</a>

4.5. While this consultation was specifically not a public consultation, the response from Rustington Parish Council included a batch of objection letters which they specifically referenced and requested be considered as forming part of the Parish Council’s response.

4.6. A further number of public representations have been received directly to the Property, Estates, and Facilities department. These are held on record and will be reported in detail if the proposed public consultation exercise is undertaken.

4.7. The views expressed by District Ward Members, Town Councils, Parish Councils, and County Division Councillors against each proposed site are summarised as follows:

Site 1	Bognor Regis Promenade (shingle) between Pier and Alexandra Theatre	Bognor Regis Town Council - Objects
Site 2	Bognor Regis Promenade (shingle) between Albert Road and Gloucester Road	Bognor Regis Town Council - Objects
Site 3	Bognor Regis Promenade (rear of prom) between Gloucester Road and Longbrook Park	Bognor Regis Town Council – No Objection Felpham Parish Council – Concerns regarding narrowing of prom, commercial success, and detriment to general appearance. Councillor Jaine Wild – Supportive of Parish comments.
Site 4	Longbrook Park, Felpham	Bognor Regis Town Council – No Objection Felpham Parish Council – Concerns regarding position behind sea wall and detriment to general appearance. Councillor Jaine Wild – Supportive of Parish comments.

Site 5	Blakes Road and Culver Road greensward areas, Felpham	Felpham Parish Council – Objects Councillor Jaine Wild – Object
Site 6	Littlehampton Promenade (shingle) between Beach Crescent and Hendon Avenue	No representation received
Site 7	Overstrand Avenue greensward, Rustington	Rustington Parish Council – Objects Councillor Alison Bryden Cooper – Object Councillor Peggy Partridge – Objects Councillor Lesley-Anne Lloyd – Objects Councillor Lynne Edwards - Objects
Site 8	South Strand shingle beach, East Preston	Councillor Peggy Partridge - Objects Kingston Parish Council – Raises questions East Preston Parish Council - Objects
Site 9	West Kingston shingle beach and greensward	Kingston Parish Council – Raises questions East Preston Parish Council - Objects
Site 10	Ferring Rife to Sea Lane greensward, Ferring	Councillor Mark Turner MBE – Does not support proposal Ferring Parish Council - Objects

- 4.8. As can be seen from the summary table, all bar one of the proposed sites have received concerns, questions, or objections against them. However, some of these concerns are not insurmountable.
- 4.9. In relation to Site 1 and 2, Bognor Regis Town Council raised concerns regarding loss of view and potential storm damage and objected to the proposal. These two sites were not included in the previous Officer recommendation for further consideration and remain unfavoured by officers.
- 4.10. In relation to Site 3 and 4, Bognor Regis Town Council made no objection. Felpham Parish Council raised concerns regarding the position of beach huts on the promenade and behind the sea wall, with supporting comments from County Councillor Jaine Wild. Both of these sites were included in the previous Officer recommendation for further consideration. Examples of beach huts on raised platforms are not uncommon around the UK coastline, and the format and layout of huts can be explored to minimise any narrowing of the promenade. There appears to be no strong objection or reason not to continue considering these sites.

- 4.11. Regarding Site 5, Felpham Parish Council raised an objection, with a supporting objection also from County Councillor Jaine Wild. This site was not included in the previous Officer recommendation for further consideration due to the density of huts already sited here, and it remains unfavoured by officers.
- 4.12. Regarding Site 6, no representations were received from either District Ward Members, The Town Council, or County Division Councillors. However, this site was not included in the previous Officer recommendation for further consideration due to the density of huts already sited here and ecological concerns relating to areas currently unoccupied by huts, and it remains unfavoured by officers.
- 4.13. In relation to Site 7 Rustington Parish Council have provided a strong objection on the grounds of insufficient nearby amenities, parking challenges, impact to local property/residents, a perceived negative impact on the open space, risk of storm damage, and that installation of beach huts at this location would be contrary to the Rustington Neighbourhood Plan. Rustington Parish Council also question the achievable secondary spend that might be hoped for. The Parish Council objection was also strongly supported by 54 objection letters from members of the public. Further objections were received from County Councillor Alison Bryden Cooper, District Councillor Peggy Partridge, District Councillor Lesley-Anne Lloyd, and District Councillor Lynne Edwards which support the reasons set out in the Parish Council objection. This site was included in the previous Officer recommendation for further consideration, and although the feedback does not support the proposal the site remains viable from a practical perspective (subject to due diligence).
- 4.14. In relation to Site 8 Kingston Parish Council has raised questions regarding parking, and the perceived net negative impact on amenity. This site is immediately adjacent to the parish boundary and the response from Kingston Parish Council is supported by an objection from the neighboring East Preston Parish Council. District Councillor Peggy Partridge has made a representation regarding beach huts in East Preston (presumably this site) although is ward member for Rustington West. The consultation responses for this site have raised a number of matters which may be challenging to overcome, but it remains relevant to explore the impact and any potential solutions to these.
- 4.15. In relation to Site 9 Kingston Parish Council has raised questions regarding parking, vegetated shingle, and the perceived net negative impact on amenity. Again, the response from Kingston Parish Council is further supported by an objection from the neighboring East Preston Parish Council. As with Site 8, the consultation responses for this site have raised a number of matters which may be challenging to overcome, but it remains relevant to explore the impact and any potential solutions to these.
- 4.16. Regarding Site 10 District Councillor Mark Turner MBE has provided a comprehensive appraisal and commentary, concluding that the proposal to install beach huts at this location is not supported as yet. As well as various reasoned comments, Councillor Turner has reviewed the site appraisal and is of the view that this site is not viable. Much of the detail which Councillor Turner

has put forward in his response would of course be considered as part of any further investigation into the viability of this site, and it is useful to be provided with this detail at this stage. Ferring Parish Council have also raised similar objections. Some of the matters raised may be challenging to overcome, but it remains relevant to explore the impact and any potential solutions to these.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1. Economy Committee agenda items are ordinarily notified to affected Ward Members. The consultation exercise described in the body of this report includes affected Ward Members. The recommendations include a proposal undertake a public consultation on selected sites.

## **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 consultation responses presented in this report has informed the list of potentially viable sites for recommendation. Members may amend this list having considered the consultation and previous study.

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

- 7.1. The recommendations of this report have no direct financial implications other than officer resource for the carrying out the continuing due diligence and public consultation. Business cases are to be undertaken for any sites which are considered viable.

## **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 the outcome of public consultation may indicate that there is little or no demand for some or all of the sites proposed.
- 8.3. There is a risk that legal due diligence against any of the sites proposed identifies barriers to delivery.
- 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.

- 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. As the report identifies, legal due diligence via title checks and any other required searches should be undertaken so it is known what issues (if any) will require mitigation in the event of any of these sites proceeding. Key consideration should be given to restrictive covenants (if any) and, in addition, access provisions to and from the areas identified in order for the leases of any hut sites to be considered viable.

- 9.2. Any eventual leases will also have to comply with S123 of the Local Government Act 1972, with regards to best value and open space disposal notices.

## **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 led 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, 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:**

[Additional Beach Huts Report - Economy 16 April 2024](#)

[Consultation-Invitation.pdf](#)