

Agenda item:

Decision maker: Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development

Subject: Beach huts & short term holiday accommodation

Report by: City Development Manager

Wards affected: Eastney & Craneswater

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the cabinet member with a review of the current and future position with regard to the addition of beach huts and short term holiday accommodation along the seafront.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development:

- 2.1 In relation to beach huts, advises the City Development Manager which site or sites should be progressed;**
- 2.2 In relation to short term holiday accommodation, approves further exploration work to investigate underground infrastructure and an ecological assessment of the land.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The city council operates a number of beach huts on the seafront and has a desire to add more huts to meet existing and future demand. There are currently three sites at Eastney Beach, Esplanade (nr St Georges Road junction) and Lumps Fort providing a total of 18, 20 and 78 huts respectively. With large waiting list of people wanting a hut, the ability to provide more beach huts would generate a number of benefits including an enhanced revenue stream for the council, enabling more people to enjoy the seafront and bringing more people into the area for local concessions and businesses.
- 3.2 There is also an opportunity to expand the type of accommodation offer on the seafront in the form of short term holiday accommodation, taking advantage of

the outstanding characteristics of the seafront. This report will give an overview of both and analyse a small number of sites that could be utilised.

Beach Huts

- 3.3 In April 2013, the Seafront Masterplan was adopted by the city council and this document provides an evidence based analysis of the seafront and highlights a number of sites for increased activity including new concessions, beach huts and visitor attractions. There are 5 potential locations where new beach huts could be accommodated and Appendices 1-5 to this report provide a brief overview of each, with further explanation below. Subject to approval of the recommendations, each site would need some further work undertaken to finalise the number of new huts that could be delivered.

Site 1 Eastney - Appendix 1

- 3.4 The site is identified in the adopted Seafront Masterplan (Section 4) as one of the key opportunity sites on Eastney Beach - *'New beach huts could be provided in 'curved clusters' with timber boardwalks to the south. Care must be taken to maintain views through the beach huts to the sea and access (via ramps / steps) from the Promenade down onto the beach.'* A planning application for 100 new huts was submitted in summer 2013, however due to the necessity to carry out further survey work linked to ecology, the application remains on hold.
- 3.5 Given the scale of the application (100 new huts), a large number of objections were received, with many suggesting a more phased approach should be taken to assess the visual impact of the new huts in this location. A revised scheme is being prepared that adds 25 new huts to the west of the existing, which also matches the height of the huts currently on the beach, another issue that many representations had raised.
- 3.6 Should the cabinet member wish to progress this site, then amended plans can be finalised for the 25 new huts, alongside revised ecological survey work and mitigation measures. The area of existing hardstanding to the east could also form part of these plans as a concession opportunity.

Site 2 Esplanade - Appendix 2

- 3.7 The site is identified in the Seafront Masterplan (Section 4) as the key gateway to the eastern end of the seafront. Objectives include a more pedestrian friendly crossing point to the Promenade, additional landscaping and public art. As Appendix 2 demonstrates, there is a large area of land to the rear of the existing beach huts that could be utilised to help provide more huts and a re-modelled junction.

- 3.8 Should the cabinet member wish to progress this site, then some initial design work will need to be carried out, in consultation with highways engineers that assesses the potential to introduce additional huts as well as some of the highway and pedestrian benefits highlighted in the masterplan.

Site 3 Lumps Fort - Appendix 3

- 3.9 Lumps Fort and the Rose Garden are highlighted in the Seafront masterplan as key attractions providing welcome retreats for visitors and residents alike. There are currently over 75 beach huts arranged in a number of blocks to the east and west of the entrance, however these are somewhat 'tired' and would benefit from being replaced. There is also a desire to enhance and re-arrange the footpaths around the entrance, incorporating some public art and additional planting.
- 3.10 Given the relatively low yield of new huts (perhaps only 5-10), the replacement of the existing huts at Lumps Fort is likely to represent a later stage of seafront development. However should the cabinet member wish to progress this site, any project should incorporate the redesign of the entrance to Lumps Fort to provide a comprehensive and cohesive design solution. Work with landscape architects to create an attractive and appropriate area of public realm will be key.

Site 4 South of Canoe Lake - Appendix 4

- 3.11 The fourth potential site lies south of Canoe Lake and adjacent to the recently opened Southsea Beach Café. Identified in Section 4 and Figure 9 of the Seafront masterplan, there is the opportunity to place new huts on the beach running east. These would complement the wide ranging activity in this area between South Parade Pier and Lumps Fort.
- 3.12 Should the cabinet member wish to progress this site, then some indicative design work will need to take place to assess the number of huts that could be accommodated, together with key issues such as height and siting. Consultation with the coastal defence team will also be necessary given the necessity for a permanent base to be constructed for the huts.

Site 5 South of Eastern Parade golf - Appendix 5

- 3.13 The final potential site lies directly south of the golf course on Eastern Parade and represents the area of the beach running west from the end of the sea wall that stops at the junction with St Georges Road. As with Sites 1 and 4, this would involve adding huts on the actual beach to the south of the promenade.
- 3.14 Should the cabinet member wish to take this site forward, some detailed design work looking at exact siting and height should be carried out, in consultation with the coastal defence team. The presence of vegetated shingle in this area of the beach will mean that the Eastney Beach Management Plan (see other

report to this meeting) will play a key role in determining the number of huts that could be constructed.

Summary

- 3.15 Of the four sites identified in the Seafront masterplan, officers consider that sites **1** (Eastney), **4** (South of Canoe Lake) and **5** (South of Eastern Parade golf) provide the most deliverable short term solution for providing more huts. Sites **2** (Esplanade) and **3** (Lumps Fort) require more significant work to ensure that the opportunity to deliver key objectives from the masterplan is not lost.

Short term holiday accommodation (Appendix 6)

- 3.16 As well as traditional beach huts, another option is to consider short term holiday accommodation. The purpose of the scheme would be to generate income for the city council. In this respect it would not be intended that the accommodation would be for sale or lease. Rather, that the city council could enlist the services of a 'high-end' holiday rental management company to market, rent and undertake the day-to-day management of the units (e.g. cleaning and repairs).
- 3.17 Appendix 6 to this report provides an analysis of a potential site off Ferry Road that had been identified to officers, and looks at the key constraints to taking it forward. As noted in recommendation 2.2, further work is required to explore whether this could be feasible, namely investigating the underground infrastructure and also an ecological assessment of the land. Should neither of these be identified as a 'showstopper' to development, then a more detailed project plan with timeframes and resource requirements should be developed and brought back to the cabinet member for consideration.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The city council wish to introduce more beach huts on the seafront, and following the preparation and adoption of the Seafront Masterplan, officers are able to take forward the site or sites that the cabinet member considers most appropriate.
- 4.2 Once the work identified in section 3 of this report has been carried out on the sites agreed by the cabinet member, a further report can be brought finalising the details of schemes before any applications are submitted.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 5.1 A preliminary equalities impact assessment has been carried out and shows that there is no need for a full assessment.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

7. Finance comments

7.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report, as survey work and assessments can be progressed utilising existing resources within the City Development team.

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Signed by:
City Development Manager

Appendices:

There are five appendices to this report:

- Appendix 1 - Eastney
- Appendix 2 - Esplanade
- Appendix 3 - Lumps Fort
- Appendix 4 - South of Canoe Lake
- Appendix 5 - South of Eastern Parade golf
- Appendix 6 - Holiday let accommodation

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Portsmouth Plan (Core Strategy)	Planning Services, 5 th Floor, Civic Offices
Seafront masterplan (SPD)	Planning Services, 5 th Floor, Civic Offices

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by: