



**THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting
<b>Subject:</b>	Accessible Beach Huts Update
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	15 March 2024
<b>Report by:</b>	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Steve Pitt
<b>Wards affected:</b>	Eastney & Craneswater

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**1. Requested by**

1.1. The Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services.

**2. Purpose**

2.1. To provide an update on the progress of the Accessible Beach Hut capital project

**3. Information Requested**

- 3.1. The original project scope was to install four new accessible beach huts to the eastern end of the existing 18 huts on Eastney Esplanade, identical in design and aesthetic. In order to support accessibility for all user groups these beach huts will require ramped access to overcome the door threshold associated with a standard hut and a consideration as to how the hirers can reach them as the existing hardstanding in front of the current beach huts is too narrow if the tenants are using the outside space.
- 3.2. The city council currently manages 112 beach huts across three locations which are extremely popular for both annual and weekly lets. The addition of four new accessibility friendly huts will open the market to user groups currently unable to use existing huts without assistance.
- 3.3. Planning permission was approved in April 2022 with a number of preliminary activities required as conditions needing discharge before works could begin. These included a full ecological survey of the area, a construction and environment management plan, and plans of the foundations of the proposed units.



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- 3.4. The ecology survey was required due to the build zone being sited within a Site of Importance to Nature & Conservation (SINC) and had to take place across a number of months so that flora and fauna could be assessed within its flowering seasons. In order to cover the broad window of the season this took place across the spring and summer of 2023.
- 3.5. The final survey report was received in November 2023. The survey picked up the presence of Japanese Knotweed and recommended that a plan to eradicate the plant from the area would be a sufficient balance to the loss of the natural habitat beneath the area of the proposed concrete base. This was reported to the Parks team who manage Japanese Knotweed within the city and they confirmed that this area could fall within any existing and ongoing treatment and eradication plans
- 3.6. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) was drawn up by H2O Geo in December 2023 to satisfy the condition of planning. The requirement of a CEMP was due to the nature of the SINC designated space and proximity of works to the sea, the bed of which is also within a protected zone.
- 3.7. An application to discharge the planning conditions was made in January 2024. The 8 week period required to discharge conditions indicates that a response will be issued late March which will allow for build works to take place from April onwards. Allowing for contractor workload we anticipate build to happen over April and May.
- 3.8. All necessary procurement documentation is being prepared to secure contractors for both laying of the concrete base and erection of the beach huts.
- 3.9. Consultation has been undertaken with several wheelchair users to look at the adaptations which will be needed in order to make the beach huts accessible for persons requiring mobility assistance.
- 3.10. A plan for how we manage bookings and prioritise those with accessibility requirements is being drawn up in the near future to ensure that once constructed the beach huts can be used at the earliest opportunity.

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Signed by  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services**



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**Appendices:**

Nil

**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