

| <b>Regeneration and Property Committee Meeting</b> |  |
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| <b>Meeting Date</b>                                | 6 July 2023  |
| <b>Report Title</b>                                | Beach Hut Policy adoption  |
| <b>EMT Lead</b>                                    | Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  |
| <b>Head of Service</b>                             | Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure  |
| <b>Lead Officer</b>                                | Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure  |
| <b>Classification</b>                              | <b>Open</b>  |
| <b>Recommendations</b>                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss and approve the Draft Beach Hut Policy to go out to public consultation.</li> <li>2. Agree for the tender of the additional beach huts (12 at Minster Leas and 14 at Leysdown Coastal Park) to be progressed and delegate to Head of Environment and Leisure and Director of Resources to award the contract subject to remaining within the allocated capital budget (£120,000).</li> </ol> |

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Beach Hut Policy 2023 for discussion, amendment and agreement to go out to public consultation.
- 1.2 Within the policy are the results of the recent survey over future beach hut developments and the report asks for permission to go out to tender and award the contract based on the contract estimates.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The Council currently has 55 beach huts either directly owned and managed by Swale Borough Council (SBC) or privately owned and sited on land under Borough Council control.
- 2.2 Minster has 29 huts privately owned and 6 are rented. Leysdown has 12 huts privately owned with 8 being rented. Annual revenue from rented huts is £13,000 and an additional £16,000 is achieved from ground rent of purchased huts.
- 2.3 Despite this success, the Council has never formally adopted a beach hut policy to oversee management of the service. In the old cabinet system, the Policy Development and review committee discussed an early draft which set out many of the principles included in this new document.

2.4 The policy sets out the vision and keys to success for the service. It details key policy principles such as;

- a) Provision of additional Beach Huts
- b) Optimising Use, Satisfying Demand and Allocations policy
- c) Standard of Maintenance & Appearance
- d) Security
- e) Pricing Structure

2.5 The policy also details future development plans in two phases. Phase 1 is to install 12 additional huts at Minster Leas and 14 at Leysdown Coastal Park. Phase 2 is to install an additional 46 huts in a second row at Minster Leas.

2.6 A summary of the recent public consultation on phase 1 is included, and a proposal is made to proceed. The required funding is already allocated in the capital programme (£120,000) as part of the medium-term financial strategy.

2.7 It is proposed to undertake further works in relation to phase 2 at Minster Leas.

### **3 Proposals**

3.1 Members are asked to discuss the principles set out within the policy and agree for it to go out to public consultation.

3.2 Members are also asked to consider the results of the public consultation on the new beach hut provision and approve for officers to go out to tender and award the contract if within the allocated sum of money.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

4.1 To not have a Beach hut policy at all. Continue with the current operation where officers create the terms and conditions and propose fees and charges that are adopted on an annual basis by Members.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

5.1 The proposal is for the draft Beach hut policy to go out for public consultation following this meeting. It will be run as per the Council's consultations policy for a minimum of 8 weeks and via an online form. Engagement with the relevant Parish Councils and Ward Members will also be undertaken.

5.2 The policy sets out results of a recent consultation on future developments.

### **6 Implications**

| <b>Issue</b>   | <b>Implications</b>   |
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| Corporate Plan | The policy cuts across a couple of objectives under two priorities. |

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|                                  | <p>3.5 Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural and other leisure activities appropriate and accessible to each age group.</p> <p>4.4 Reduce dependence on government controlled funding sources and support staff to find innovative ways to ensure other objectives can be met in the context of diminished resources.</p>  |
| Financial, Resource and Property | <p>The current 2023-24 budget assumes increased income from beach hut rental. Adopting the policy and agreeing to progress future developments will help to protect and increase that revenue stream for the Council.</p> <p>A sum of £120,000 is already allocated in the capital programme to fund the installation of the 26 additional beach huts.</p> <p>Based on a % split of 80% sales and 20% rentals, 20 hut sales at a projected £15k would generate £300k in capital receipts.</p> <p>The anticipated revenue from 20 huts at £498 ground rent would generate an additional £9,960 in revenue per annum. 6 rentals at £1,463 per annum would generate £8,778, but this is based on all 6 being occupied and at an annual rent. The % split can be amended when built depending on interest.</p> <p>Maintenance of the beach hut sites e.g. litter collection and grass cutting are already covered by existing revenue budgets. There will be an increase maintenance costs for those that are retained for rental but the increased revenue income will help to offset that.</p> |
| Legal, Statutory and Procurement | <p>Beach huts are a discretionary service and therefore fall under the Local Govt Miscellaneous act where Councils are able to levy fees.</p> <p>The beach huts have been confirmed as under permitted development due to their size and nature.</p>   |
| Crime and Disorder               | <p>The policy has a section relating to security and anti-social behaviour. We are confident our policies and terms and conditions allow us to control behaviour at the huts.</p> <p>Due to the remote location of the huts, they will always be susceptible to vandalism and theft. Our terms and conditions encourage owners and renters to secure their asset robustly and to not leave items of value in overnight.</p>  |

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| Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency                 | <p>The huts are made from sustainable wood sources as detailed in the specification for construction. They do not require mains utilities and we often find owners/renters use sustainable power sources such as solar panels to assist them.</p> <p>The locations of the huts are considered carefully to ensure they do not have a detrimental impact to the environment.</p> |
| Health and Wellbeing   | As detailed in the corporate plan we encourage active recreation and beach huts encourage users to enjoy the coastal environment.   |
| Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults | There are no safeguarding concerns considered in relation to the policy.  |
| Risk Management and Health and Safety                        | The licence requires all owners and the Council (in relation to rental huts) to maintain the asset to a good standard. This reduces the risk of injury. Furthermore, there are strict rules on what can and can't be done in or stored in the huts to reduce fire risks.  |
| Equality and Diversity                                       | <p>The current hut design means steps are required for access. The policy however sets out how the Council will consider adaptations in order to provide for disabled access.</p> <p>The pricing structure has been revised recently to provide more accessible weekly rents for those that cannot afford to purchase or annually rent the hut.</p>                             |
| Privacy and Data Protection                                  | The waiting lists and licences are held in accordance with data protection principles.  |

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Draft Beach Hut Policy 2023

## 8 Background Papers

n/a