

<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	2 March 2016
<b>Report Title</b>	Beach huts in Leysdown
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact
<b>Head of Service</b>	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. To continue the beach huts scheme with a further twenty huts to be constructed at Leysdown. The final mix of huts available for rent or sale to be agreed by the Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance.
	2. To approve a capital budget allocation of £60,000 for the provision of the beach huts and associated safety barriers.

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

1.1 This report provides an update on progress with the two phases of beach hut construction in Minster to date and proposes introducing a further ten huts, in Leysdown.

## **2 Background**

2.1 Following the success of the initial phase of twenty beach huts at Minster which were constructed in 2013, a further phase of fifteen huts were constructed in 2015. Twenty nine of these have sold and six rented out on an annual basis.

2.2 The current prices of the huts are £10,000 to buy, with an additional annual ground rent of £300, or £950 per annum to rent. The current scheme enables those people who have rented huts to apply to purchase them at a future date.

2.3 The beach huts have continued to attract significant positive interest and there are currently more than 400 people on the waiting list. To date there have been no incidents of vandalism or serious issues relating to the huts and it is widely acknowledged that the huts provide an attractive tourism based feature on the seafront landscape as well as providing capital and revenue income for the Council.

- 2.4 During the consultation for the original scheme, several respondents said they would be interested in alternative locations to Minster, and Leysdown was the most popular location.
- 2.5 The current Terms and Conditions for the hire or purchase of beach huts were extensively consulted upon during the first two phases at Minster and it is considered appropriate that these will apply to any further developments also, though it will be appropriate to review the sale prices when the likely launch date is known. The rental prices are set annually as part of the Fees and Charges review.
- 2.6 Beckwith Consulting were engaged to carry out an investigation into the feasibility of a further phase of huts and to identify suitable locations. To this end, the Shellness grassed car park at Leysdown was identified as an appropriate location. The huts would be located about four metres from the sea wall at the western end of the car park, adjacent to the holiday park and facing the sea. A map of the proposed site is shown at appendix I.
- 2.7 The cost of the supply, building and installation of twenty beach huts on this site in Leysdown is estimated at £46,000 based on the same specification as those at Minster. It has been further suggested that consideration be given to installing some safety rails/barriers to the front and rear of the site and a risk assessment would be undertaken to establish specifically what is needed.
- 2.8 There are public conveniences nearby and the owners of the adjacent Garden Café have stated that they would be prepared for beach hut users to use their facilities also.
- 2.9 The Minster Beach Huts Association have been instrumental in the success of the initial schemes and consideration will be given to creating a similar group at Leysdown to encourage “community ownership”, or to investigate the feasibility of expanding the current group to include Leysdown too.

### **3 Proposal**

- 2.1 Based on the success of the two established phases, it is proposed that twenty huts be constructed in Leysdown. These will be a combination of huts for rent and for sale, so as not to exclude those who would prefer to rent a hut on an annual basis.
- 2.2 The final mix of huts available for rent or sale from the Borough Council will be agreed by the Head of Commissioning & Customer Contact in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance.

2.3 It is also proposed that a capital budget of £60,000 be allocated for this project to cover the cost of the provision of the beach huts and any associated safety barriers and fences required following the risk assessment.

## **4 Alternative Options**

4.1 One option would be to build no more huts and retain the current stock. This would miss the opportunity of building on the success of the scheme to date and generate more income for the Council.

4.2 A second option would be construct a further phase at Minster, though it is considered appropriate to explore alternative locations for the proposed phase, and it might be considered appropriate to expand the Minster presence as part of another future phase.

4.3 A further option would be to introduce more or fewer than the proposed twenty huts. This is not recommended because at this time it is considered that this number will best balance income potential with the opportunity to establish the appetite for such facilities in this location.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

5.1 In 2012 Beckwith Consulting undertook extensive consultation with numerous parties on the Isle of Sheppey; a mix of residents, visitors and local businesses.

5.2 Before phase two commenced, comments were invited on the pilot project from members of the public which were considered at that time.

5.3 Consultation has already begun regarding the proposed site at Leysdown, including Leysdown Parish Council, Sheppey Tourism Alliance, Sheppey Matters, The Garden Café and the Police, who did point out that as there have been more incidences of anti-social behaviour in parts of Leysdown than at the present site in Minster, this should be a consideration when deciding on the proposed location.

5.4 Should the proposals be adopted, then a wider consultation process will be undertaken, including the neighbouring businesses and nearby residents.

## **6 Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	A Borough to be proud of – adding to the tourism offering.

Financial, Resource and Property	The one-off cost of the project would be funded by an allocation from the capital budget. The split between capital receipts through sales of huts and revenue income through rental income and ground rent will be dependent on the eventual split between sales and rentals. Staffing resources are needed to manage the sale and rentals of the huts and this is ongoing in terms on the rented huts. It is proposed that this would be administered and promoted by the Leisure Development Officer.
Legal and Statutory	Planning permission is not required; and the terms and conditions are already established through the earlier phases of the scheme. Legal services will draw up the licences for the individual huts.
Crime and Disorder	The huts have the potential to attract vandalism and anti-social behaviour. However, to date there have been no such incidents reported in the schemes at Minster.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	A risk assessment will be undertaken to establish the need for safety barriers or fencing adjacent to the proposed site.
Equality and Diversity	An initial CIA was completed prior to the commencement of the trial project. The introduction of beach huts has no negative impact on people who possess any of the protected characteristics. The only potential impact identified refers to access to the huts for those with the disability protected characteristic. As a result the plans will ensure that the huts are accessible for those with disabilities.
Sustainability	As far as practicable, appropriate construction materials will be used from sustainable sources.
Health and Wellbeing	No direct implications, though it is considered that the scheme would add to the tourism offering on Sheppey, encouraging visitors to enjoy the seafront facilities.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I – Maps showing proposed location of beach huts

## 8 Background Papers

- Report by Beckwith Consulting on the provision of beach huts on the Isle of Sheppey, October 2015