



CABINET 6 January 2003

## **HYTHE PROMENADE ENHANCEMENT**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Promenade, which is owned by NFDC, is a fundamental part of the Hythe Waterfront. In conjunction with the Hythe Pier and Ferry the area forms an important gateway and asset to the New Forest.
- 1.2 This report focuses on the Promenade itself. The purpose of the report is:
  - 1.2.1 to inform Members of progress to date
  - 1.2.2 to seek approval for project implementation
  - 1.2.3 to seek approval for the release of developers contributions

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council has been working towards enhancing this area by the creation of a more continuous waterside pedestrian route. This will focus on the central Promenade as a redeveloped facility offering a visually rich and stimulating public amenity.
- 2.2 Hythe is unique amongst the Waterside settlements for the close proximity of its centre to the waterfront of Southampton Water. The potential of this amenity facility and associated experience is not however fully realised, as the Promenade is at present rather stark and uninviting. The space is visually dominated by vehicular activities, with a restricted pedestrian domain that is detached from other walking routes through Hythe. Most regrettably, there is no clear pedestrian linkage between the Promenade and the Pier, thus new visitors arriving on the Hythe Ferry are not easily allowed the pleasure of the Promenade's clear views and stimulating waterfront experience.
- 2.3 The land of the Promenade is owned by New Forest District and the highway alongside is adopted by Hampshire County Council. The wider areas as related to the extended waterside route are controlled by either commercial or private bodies or by the Hythe and Dibden Parish Council.

### **3 PLANNING AND CONSERVATION POLICY**

- 3.1 The need for improvement of the Hythe Waterfront has been recognised for many years.
- 3.2 The Hythe Waterfront Supplementary Planning Guidance (adopted in December 1995) and specific policies within the New Forest District Local Plan strive to co-ordinate the manner in which the area is developed. The focus of these guidance documents is upon achieving high quality built development.
- 3.3 The mudflats alongside the Promenade are protected as sites of international importance for migratory wildfowl. This designation, together with a number of other protective measures form an important constraint to any improvements along the Promenade as intended works must not impinge on the mudflats nature conservation value. English Nature and all other statutory bodies have been consulted on the waterfront regeneration principles and the necessary approvals are being sought.

### **4 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 In June of 2001 an annotated photomontage entitled '*Hythe Waterfront Regeneration; Appraisal of Design Parameters was prepared*'. This presentation summarised the research works and demonstrated the range of issues and factors that needed consideration in achieving a comprehensive Waterside walkway. The document was issued in draft form and circulated to local Members and Officers both within this Council and other relevant bodies.
- 4.2 In tandem with the District Council's own work, the County Council are also now running two major projects in Hythe. These comprise a redevelopment of the Passenger Interchange Facility together with a programme of planned maintenance for the Hythe Pier (in conjunction with the owners White Horse Ferries). The HCC contributions towards these two projects comprise South West Hampshire Transportation Strategy monies in the sums of £600,000 and £850,000 respectively. In order to ensure these projects mesh together, the Council's Landscape & Open Space Team is taking an active role in the current Hythe Projects Steering Group and is also represented on all three supporting Technical Groups.
- 4.3 The area of land now known as The Promenade was created by building a new sea wall and reclaiming the land between this wall and the historic village centre. The District Council commissioned a Ground Penetrating Radar Survey of this land (pedestrian walkway and vehicular highway) to investigate the stability of these reclaimed lands. The Consultants Report (*Subsurface Geotechnical Company*, February 2002) advises that the land is structurally sound, and the existing concrete seawall will therefore be retained as the basis of the new layout.

- 4.4 A reduced copy of The Promenade Masterplan is attached, and a larger scale colour plan will be presented at Cabinet. These drawings shows the main elements of the proposed layout, comprising:
- 4.4.1 A remodelled highway space serving to accommodate the minimum necessary vehicular traffic whilst conveying a clear priority of use to the pedestrian
  - 4.4.2 A new public space comprising a road-level base area with stepped seating rising up in a quadrant ground plan. This 'amphitheatre' form open space could host activities such as musical performances and specialist markets.
  - 4.4.3 A direct pedestrian link from the northern end of the Promenade onto the existing Pier. Whilst this link is integral to the Promenade Project, its construction will however be the responsibility of the HCC Pier Maintenance Project. (As such, its construction will follow that of the main Promenade scheme)
  - 4.4.4 A boardwalk seaward of the existing (retained) sea-wall, which would oversail the angled concrete slab revetment at the base of the wall whilst staying within District Council land.
- 4.5 These elements are all seen as positively enhancing The Promenade; transforming it from functional blandness into a facility that has a quality and depth of interest in its own right. The redeveloped Promenade will also serve to enable people (from both within Hythe and also travelling from further afield) to enjoy the splendours of the maritime prospect. The area will appeal to all ages and all mobilities, having wheelchair-friendly surfacings and ramped access to all parts. It will utilise a palette of quality materials selected to be robust and durable. The structures will be designed to resist not only normal wear and tear but also the risk of intentional vandalism.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 This project has been presented at various times to the Hythe & Dibden Parish Council and to the Hythe Centre Advisory Group (which includes local NFDC Members), both for information and to receive positive feedback to hone ideas. Both parties have greatly welcomed progress upon the Promenade Regeneration Project, and have emphasised a desire to see progress on the ground.
- 5.2 The Masterplan Scheme was presented to the Parish Council's General Purposes & Finance Committee on 21.10.02 who confirmed their approval to proceed with the scheme and to release the necessary developers contributions money
- 5.3 The general public were consulted on the Masterplan through an exhibition held at the Parish Council Offices from 19 Nov through 29 Nov 2002, with an Officer presence on the first two days. Parties with particular interests, e.g. businesses and residences adjoining the Promenade were individually invited to attend to discuss the Proposals with Officers.
- 5.4 The overall response to the Public Consultation was extremely supportive. During the two days when the exhibition was manned there were 96 visitors, with a further 200 people (estimated) during the following days when it was unmanned. All visitors were invited to complete a questionnaire upon the Proposals, and 83 completed forms were returned. Of the respondents, 78

confirmed either Approval/Strong Approval of the general principle of the improvements scheme, with only one person expressing disapproval. The questionnaire contained a further 12 questions on specific aspects of the proposals and the majority view was a clear Approval/Strong Approval of all elements.

- 5.5 Further to the confirmation of public support, the Consultation exercise demonstrated that a number of small adjustments to the scheme would be beneficial. The scheme has now been amended accordingly.

## **6 ASSESSMENT FOR RELEASE OF DEVELOPERS CONTRIBUTIONS**

- 6.1 Is the proposed scheme directly related to the development, which it proposes to serve?  
*Yes, it is centrally located with good access to the development area.*
- 6.2 Does the need for the scheme arise from the development and is it relevant to it?  
*Yes, the need arises substantially from the demands of the adjoining new housing areas.*
- 6.3 Does the scheme conform to the adopted Local Plan and Development Briefs for the areas and fall within the terms of the S106 Agreement?  
*There is a specific proposal in the Adopted Local Plan and specific Supplementary Planning Guidance. This scheme would meet the aspirations expressed in these documents to provide a functional public open space to meet the needs of the local community.*
- 6.4 Does the scheme complement or improve existing or planned facilities in the catchment ?  
*Yes, there is nothing like it locally.*
- 6.5 Can the request be accommodated within the funds available, given the known and anticipated requirements within the area for which contributions are held?  
*Yes, the Parish Council has identified this as a priority scheme and that the allocation, if agreed, would mean that the substantial element of the fund will have been spent. This is recognised in the priority list of schemes that the Parish Council has agreed.*
- 6.6 Is the proportion of funding from contributions reasonable, given the nature of the scheme?  
*Yes, the allocation is fundamental to partnering other resources for the full scheme. With the gearing of other funds it represents a good investment for the town*
- 6.7 Is there financial need on behalf of the promoter of the scheme?  
Yes

## **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The existing Promenade is effectively a 'dead-end' space with limited access, and there is currently a small element of unsociable behaviour, particularly associated with out-of-hours drinking. One of the main objectives of the proposed scheme is to open up a through route from the Promenade to the Pier, which will encourage use by many more people and during a greater part of the day. Subject to appropriate regulation and monitoring, it could be appropriate for the adjacent Public House to be encouraged to overspill onto the Promenade to introduce a 'Continental' street café ambience.
- 7.2 The numbers of people using the Promenade will undoubtedly increase, and it is believed that this will provide increased natural surveillance, which is an effective means of encouraging responsible behaviour.
- 7.3 The police are represented on the Hythe Centre Advisory Group, which is involved in the development of the scheme. Liaison with the police will continue through the consultation and detailed design stages.

## **8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Project Steering Group has sought funding from a range of sources and currently have available the following confirmed sums:
- 8.1.1 £150,000 from HCC's Country Towns Initiative
  - 8.1.2 £50,000 from HCC's Highways Maintenance Programme
- 8.2 This report seeks approval to release the following monies:
- 8.2.1 £15,000 from developers contributions (Public Open Space) to continue design work
  - 8.2.2 £152,500 from developers contributions (Public Open Space) for project implementation
- 8.3 This funding will enable the core aspects of the Promenade enhancement to be realised. Further areas of funding are still being investigated (including a recent £50,000 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund). Should these be forthcoming, then the extra monies will be used to further raise the detail quality of these works, if however they are not available then existing funds will still cover the primary elements of the project

## **9 MAINTENANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 NFDC is currently responsible for maintenance of the Promenade walkway with HCC maintaining the areas of vehicular highway and adjacent footway to the west. It is proposed that the areas formally dedicated as 'Highway' be adjusted to accord with the revised design, such that HCC become responsible for the wider areas of shared surfacing (i.e. of dual vehicular & pedestrian usage), with NFDC being responsible for the pedestrian-only sections together with the seating, planting and non-Highways lighting. The bridging element serving to join the Promenade with the Pier would also be

maintained as an integral part of the Pier structure by the appropriate body. The most significant new introduction for NFDC as regards maintenance is the boardwalk structure. It is however intended to reflect the construction of the Pier itself in the detailing of this element; comprising a steel substructure surmounted by timber boards and stainless steel handrails. Whilst nothing is vandal-proof, this combination would greatly limit the opportunity for vandalism and thereby help keep NFDC's long-term maintenance expenditure within sustainable levels.

## **10 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The final scheme will offer the opportunity to dramatically improve this aspect of Hythe to the benefit of the whole waterside area. Care will be taken to avoid impinging on the ecological value of the adjacent mudflats. Specific environmental approvals for these works are currently being sought from the appropriate regulatory bodies.

## **11 CONCLUSIONS**

11.1 Design work undertaken to date demonstrates the great opportunity for environmental improvements at the Promenade. Although there are a host of real constraints to work around, Hythe's Promenade area has the potential to be an exciting and rewarding place to visit as a positive addition to the existing much valued character of Hythe village centre.

## **12 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS**

12.1 Cllr B Rickman supports these Proposals.

## **13 RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 That the project design be approved; and

13.2 That Developers Contributions in the sum of £167,500 from Public Open Space be agreed to enable the Improvement scheme at Hythe Promenade to be completed, the monies to be released as the stages of the scheme develop.

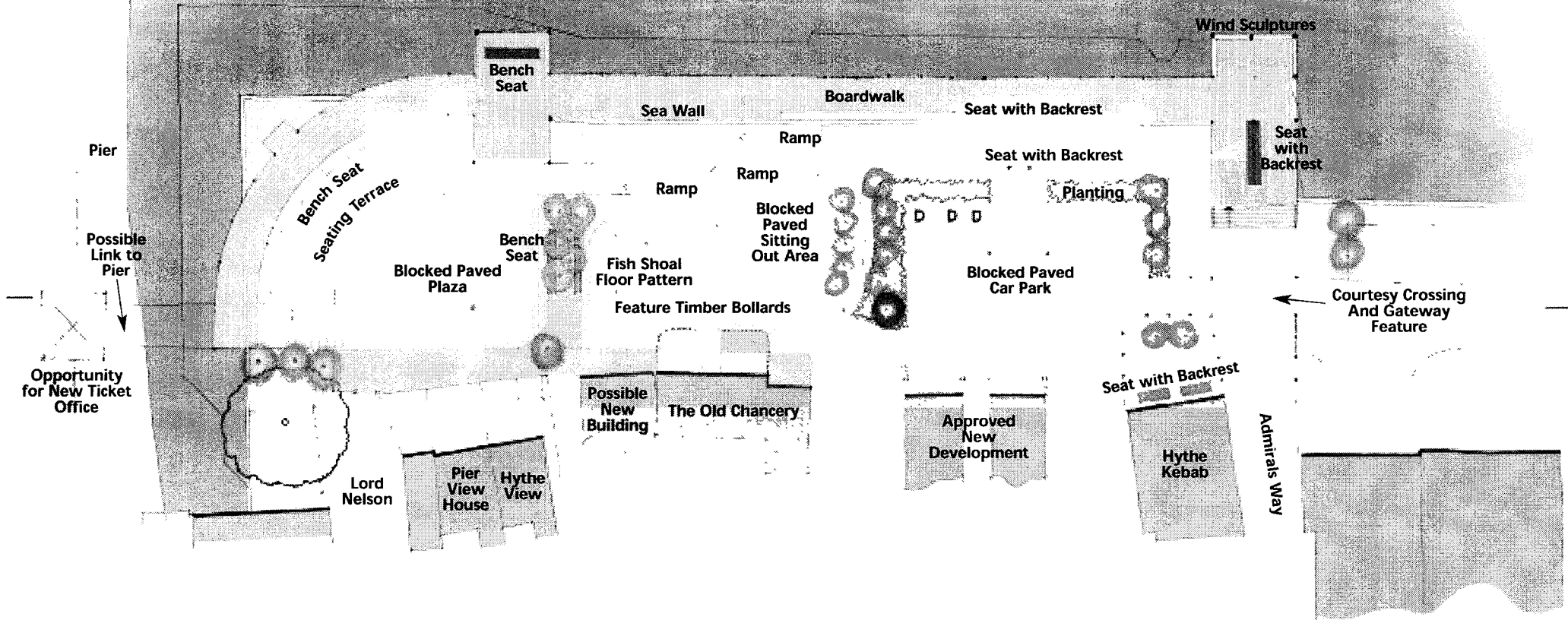
### *Further Information:*

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### *Background papers:*

Local Plan Policies HD-1 through HD-9  
Hythe Waterfront Supplementary Planning Guidance  
PDI File: 411.10.9

**Plan View**



**Hythe Promenade - Proposed Improvements**

6th January 2003