

REPORT OF THE KEYHAVEN AND COAST BEST VALUE REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1# This report, produced by the Self Assessment Team, informs Members about the service itself; the process used to undertake the Review and the outcomes from the Review. Importantly, it seeks approval to a Service Improvement Plan for continuous improvement over the next five years. (See Appendix 1)
- 1.2 The report draws on inputs from the Self Assessment Team, customers, stakeholders, partners, Members and the Best Value Review Board.
- 1.3 It was decided to link Beach Huts and Keyhaven River as a Best Value package as these are the Leisure elements of the Coast but it is acknowledged that a future Review should be undertaken with Technical Services of the whole Coastal package.

2. OVERVIEW

2.1 FINANCIAL

- 2.1.1 The overall pattern of expenditure and income for the Service for 2002/03 is shown as follows:

2002/03	Gross Expenditure	Gross income	Net income
Keyhaven	£114,470	£114,630	160
Beach Huts	£79,890	£184,200	104,310
TOTAL	£194,360	£298,830	£104,470

- 2.1.2 The overall cost of the review is estimated to be in the order of £10,000, which is comprised of employee time diverted from other tasks. There were no costs involved for external consultants or similar expenditure.
- 2.1.3 The Service Improvement Plan contains details of the savings prior to 1 April 2003. This is a combination of increased income and service cost savings.

2.2 4 C's ACTIVITIES OF THE REVIEW

2.2.1 Challenge

A challenge workshop was held at an early stage of the review with the full self-assessment team and at a later stage with the Focus Groups for each of the service areas.

The key outcome for beach huts was that they should remain within Council management.

For Keyhaven the preferred option for the Focus Group initially was

for a mechanism which led to management by users/stakeholders but ultimately they also concluded that management should remain with the Council. This matched the findings of the wider stakeholder survey.

The EFQM model was also used to challenge the Service in the areas of People, Leadership, Policy and Strategy, Partnerships and Resources and Processes.

2.2.2# Consult

A comprehensive consultation exercise has been undertaken as part of this Review, which included:-

- A Citizens Panel Survey in an attempt to obtain views from non-users.
- A Questionnaire circulated to all Beach Hut Owners and Mooring Holders.
- Focus Group Consultation (A new Focus Group was set up for Beach Hut owners)
- Stakeholder Surveys to both internal and external stakeholders
- Partners Survey

Outcomes from these consultation exercises have produced a large amount of information. Key outcomes are:

- Outstanding levels of response to survey.
- Need to recognise that the feedback is dominated by users. It is good to have this level of response but it is important to reflect that, as steward of these areas, NFDC (or any successor body) has a role to ensure a balance between all types of user, as well as economic, social and environmental matters.
- Lack of awareness of policy overall or even on specifics eg waiting list approach; charging, consultative arrangements, maintenance responsibilities etc. There is work to be done on information. The favoured approach is direct mail and there are existing opportunities for us to use. Exhibitions are also favoured.
- Both beach huts and Keyhaven users are clearly saying that “Remote is best”, this is what they most like about things at the moment. In the order of 90% of respondents to the user survey felt strongly about this.
- This preference is further reflected in the response to the question “what improvements?” where the single biggest

category was “none”. There was no “big issue” shared by the respondents.

- The main thing which is disliked, by some way, is crime (40%), followed by parking.
- On the face of it, there is a change of heart when looking at the Council’s approach to promoting the area. 44% favoured keeping the current approach but 36% tend towards favouring more active promotion. We are treating this with caution.
- 56% of respondents had had a mooring for more than 6 years, a good number for a lot longer than that. The policy intention is for continuity and this would seem to suggest this happens. At 37% for beach huts, it is quite surprising that it is less.
- It has been interesting to see the reaction of Focus Groups to the idea of alternative delivery models, a mixture of doubt, suspicion and incredulity. It has illustrated that this is a new process for all concerned. The views at Keyhaven were tempered somewhat when their draft feedback was discussed at the second meeting and support given for NFDC management but with a return to a more formal Advisory Panel.

Strategy

- There is a need for plans for both elements of the service.
- There should be a future cross cutting assessment of the Council’s coastal work as a whole.

Service Provision

- In the operation of current services, there are site wardening / inspection visits carried out by employees from a number of service areas. There is scope to make them more aware of each other’s role. There should also be a review of the specific role of coastal wardening. There is a very slim management structure supporting site workers, in some cases it can be direct to a Head of Service. It is by no means clear that this is as effective as it could be.
- On the future of service delivery the views from all elements of consultation were different. With beach huts, as there is no credible alternative provider, there was particular support for the service to be provided via NFDC.

- At Keyhaven the Focus Group initially held the strongest view for change, offering a number of possible service delivery options. However, this subsequently became unanimous support for NFDC provision. Of those that held a strong view in the licence holder survey, responses showed NFDC as the preferred route (54%) with “Users” 24% and Trust 16%. Partner organisations were also in favour of NFDC direct management.
- There are other models for river management and with the lack of performance comparisons in the field, the Review team have openly sought options, with limited success. These will be pursued in the SIP.
- Re-investment was a key theme of the consultation and what value for money the direct user receives. Related to this is the level of contribution made by those who visit the area but are not paying licence fees.

Efficiency

- Respondents to the licence holder survey do not like fees going up in big jumps. Whilst most, clearly would want no or minimal increases, those that accept the need for increase are looking for it staged over time. This is something for the Council to reflect on as charging is usually related to the budget needs of the year ahead, rather than a medium term plan.
- There is a need to be clear where the Council stands on the degree to which the service is there to maximise financial return or whether this is tempered by other objectives. It is expected that this will be achieved through the expenditure planning process.
- Survey returns recognised that there may be some improvements that it may be reasonable to ask licence holders to pay for but the majority said not.

Quality

- The majority of licence holders at Keyhaven were very happy with how things are run (54%) and 73% who rate it better than average but there was a strong response (19%) who were definitely not happy. We need to look at this, it may be because we have to exercise control on individual allocations, so people do not always get what they want. With the beach huts less were unhappy but equally less rated it really good.

Access

- The user profile of both Keyhaven and the Beach Huts is one where older people are strongly represented. This is to a greater degree than the District population as a whole. Is this an issue – or does it mean that the Service is one of those which is aimed at this age group (where others may have a profile “younger” than the District as a whole). There may be implications for access arrangements.

The complete results are shown in Appendix 2.

2.2.3# Compare

Draft Performance Indicators have been developed as part of this Review and comparators have been identified. These are shown in Appendix 3. Fees and charges have been compared with other providers and the development of performance indicator comparisons will be included in the Service Improvement Plan.

A visit to Christchurch Borough Council informed the comparison process as they recently completed a Best Value Review of the Coast and lessons they had learned will contribute to the Service Improvement Plan for further investigation. Some work has also been undertaken with a set of harbours, at this stage as the basis for future performance indicators but which will lead to process benchmarking in future. A particular aspect of this that will be considered is the level of staffing on site at Keyhaven. The very low levels currently deployed have worked satisfactorily in the past but with increasing legislation and litigation, there is a need to assess if arrangements have kept in step with general practice.

It should be pointed out however that local circumstances must be taken into account as these indicators are developed. The “product” being sold is a complex one and strictly speaking there are no “like for like” comparisons. None the less it is our intention to form a better network of information where we can, if only to give broad indicators of performance and investment. It is also a factor that many comparators will be private or trust companies who may not be willing to participate.

2.2.4. Compete

The performance indicators which have been developed will be used to assess the performance of Beach Huts and Keyhaven River Management at an early stage of the Service Improvement Plan. Internal competition for provision of services such as wardening and contract management is taking place and a key outcome should be more co-ordinated working.

2.3 KEY REVIEW OUTCOMES

2.3.1 Cost Savings or Income Generation

Beach Hut rentals have been increased by 6% for the financial year 2003/04. From 2000/01 to 2002/03 income increased by £44,694. Keyhaven River fees and charges have increased by 6% for January 2003 to produce a further £5,000 income beyond inflation. For January 2004 mooring fees will again be ahead of inflation but by a lesser percentage. Overall, income has been maximised through fees and charges over the last five years with increases ahead of inflation. This has also meant that in comparisons with other providers our fees are in the upper quartile.

Provision is made in a rural setting, it is not a resort or marina location. The user pays for that very "isolation" and unspoilt character, which is an extremely rare commodity along Hampshire's coast. Some users of course would point to the other side of that coin and the lack of facilities provided for them. Considered overall therefore, and referring to market comparisons it is believed that fees are at the limit to remain consistent with current policies. From 2000/01 to 2003/04 the Beach Hut fees and charges have increased by 26% and Keyhaven 14%.

The abolition of CCT has enabled the contract management element of the Service to be challenged. This area is currently being examined and is a key action in the improvement plan.

Recharges for contract management were £19,030 in 2002/03 for beach huts.

2.3.2 Service Improvement

Improvements to the Service have been identified as part of the 4 Cs activities and are included in the Service Improvement Plan.

Key improvements to be implemented are:

- Create a beach hut strategic plan including the role of beach huts and links to the corporate strategy which could be incorporated into the Leisure Service Plan.
- Assess the policy base in the operation of these services in respect of residents/non residents; age profile, cost recovery, continuity of occupation.
- Make more effort to ensure key stakeholders are aware of policy documents – both internal and external to NFDC
- Explore examples of possible alternative service provider options at Keyhaven and consider their operational performance.

- Increased communication with stakeholders for information and awareness.
- Coastal wardening to be more integrated.
- Vandalism and crime reduced.
- Performance Indicators established and monitored.
- Review car park fees/concession or free for beach hut owners and mooring holders as part of Traffic Management.
- Improve net cost performance.
- Investigate and determine direct and indirect costs. Use these in assessment of performance.
- Review the content of the Keyhaven River Management Plan in the light of the Solent European Marine Sites Programme.

2.3.3 Policy Changes

- 2.3.3.1 The fees and charges policy within the expenditure planning process for beach hut site rental and Keyhaven Mooring rentals should be reviewed to enable a strategic approach to be taken. It is recommended that a four year plan is adopted and that the fees and charges are agreed at an early part of the expenditure plan process to enable the required notice to be given and the necessary administrative functions to be undertaken. Charging rates to residents and non-residents should also be agreed as part of this process.
- 2.3.3.2 Keyhaven River Management Plan is in operation and has been discussed with previous consultative groups. This Plan has recently been updated in consultation with current stakeholders. The Plan is written in the context of the Council's policies in its Leisure Portfolio Service Plan and is also consistent with the findings of the Review. Beach Hut site management does not currently have a plan and it is proposed that a service plan is developed in conjunction with stakeholders and linked to the overall Leisure Service Plan.
- 2.3.3.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance has been developed specifically for beach huts and has been adopted by Cabinet and Council in March 2003. The need for this arose for three main reasons: the need for consistent and vandal resistant design; the pressure of market conditions to supply increasing numbers of huts in environmentally sensitive areas and the overall design impact of these structures on the coast. There are implications for asset management and these are

covered in that section later in the report.

- 2.3.3.4 The Beach Hut Licence conditions have been re-written taking into account comments from the Office of Fair Trading and linked to the Beach Hut Supplementary Planning Guidance.

2.3.4 Recommended Delivery Options

Given the findings of the activities in the Review, there is strong support from stakeholders for the Council to continue with its role in delivering the Service. There were no findings arising from the other activities undertaken in the Review for the team to counter this view.

There is a clear message that, whilst the Council clearly has a fiscal interest in the management of these services, there is recognition of the key role to be played in accounting for all the various influences that bear on these sites. It is very apparent that the objectivity of the Council is welcomed in managing the particular self interests of any given party. As long as the Council can maintain confidence in that role, there will be support for its stewardship of these unique sites.

Therefore the recommended delivery options for Beach Huts and Keyhaven are for them to remain in Council Management. However, there are aspects of management that need to be improved and this will be achieved following the implementation of the issues highlighted in the Service Improvement Plan.

2.3.5# Improved Contribution to Corporate Objectives

See Appendix 4

3. BEST VALUE REVIEW BOARD COMMENTS

The Best Value Board has considered the work undertaken by the Review Team as laid out in the draft final report.

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by the Review Team to establish the views of key stakeholders, obtain comparisons with other service providers and to consider options for alternative methods of service delivery.

The evidence presented indicates a generally high level of satisfaction among users in the way beach huts and the river mooring service are managed and delivered. A strong case has been made for services to continue to be managed by the Council and delivered in the same way.

The improvement plan is comprehensive and seeks to address the issues raised as a result of the review.

Further refinement of the performance indicators is suggested so that a separate set of indicators is created for both the beach hut and Keyhaven river services.

It is the Board's view that the majority of the improvement plan actions are achievable. Some improvements have already been implemented in advance of the completion of the review. Prospects for the service to improve from its already fairly high standard are therefore good.

4. THE SERVICE

4.1 Beach Huts - Management

This covers the Management and administration of beach huts which includes maintenance of a data base which links to sundry debtors to ensure correct invoices are issued.

The Service deals with queries from existing beach hut owners, queries from people wishing to become beach hut owners and general queries from Members of the public regarding such issues as dogs on beaches, litter collection and catering concessions. This service also deals with the maintenance of beach hut sites including repair of steps, grass cutting, pest control etc and the provision of a wardening service currently supplied by the Engineers Division of Resources Directorate. It also provides consultation for planning applications. The Beach Huts generated in excess of £100,000 net income for the Council in 2002/03 and one of the key issues from beach hut owners is "what do we get for our money". They are the second highest net income generator for Leisure.

The charging policy has not been reviewed for several years and this will form part of the Service Improvement Plan.

As previously stated, part of the service is carried out by Resources Directorate but due to a restructuring in this Service, certain elements such as contract monitoring and wardening will be examined with a view to consolidate the operation.

The Beach Huts were, in the main, owned by the Council until 1990 when they were sold to individuals. The ownership of beach huts is a very popular leisure pastime and is becoming more popular each season. The price of huts has increased significantly during the last 5 years with some huts fetching in excess of £15,000.

There is potential to allocate more beach hut sites in some areas, particularly Calshot, which could generate substantial income for the Council. This course of action would, however, be contrary to the Coastal Management Plan and the Beach Hut Supplementary Planning Guidance so Members would need to decide whether they wished this to be pursued.

The Service is purely discretionary so does not have to be provided by the Council but it is unlikely that selling the sites, or outsourcing the management, could be as profitable to the Council as the current arrangements. This is because current costs for the Service are very low and are unlikely to rise substantially in the future.

Issues which impact on the Service are the Coastal Management Plan, Environmental Issues which include subsistence of some sites and cliff movement particularly at Barton on Sea. Another issue is the net profit received by the Council and the small amount of investment in the beach hut sites which have deteriorated during the last 5 years as fees and charges have increased.

There are currently around 800 beach huts with differing charging mechanisms for each site as follows:

From 1 April 2003

Registration Fee (sale of private huts)	£19.50
---	--------

Site Rent Residents

Milford-on-Sea (concrete)	Per annum	£249.00
Milford-on-Sea (wooden)	Per annum	£244.00
Barton on Sea	Per annum	£217.00
Calshot	Per annum	£254.00
Hordle Cliff		
Up to 50 square feet	Per annum	£207.00
50-75 square feet	Per annum	£218.00
75-125 square feet	Per annum	£233.00
Over 125 square feet	Per annum	£244.00

Site Rent Non-Residents

Milford-on-Sea (concrete)	Per annum	£328.00
Milford-on-Sea (wooden)	Per annum	£323.00
Barton-on-Sea	Per annum	£297.00
Calshot	Per annum	£334.00
Hordle Cliff		
Up to 50 square feet	Per annum	£286.00
50-75 square feet	Per annum	£297.00
75-125 square feet	Per annum	£312.00
Over 125 square feet	Per annum	£323.00

(VAT is added to all site rents)

Licence fees may be made in two instalments on 1st April and 1st September.

This generated income of £184,200 for the Council in 2002/03, a net income of £104,310, which rose to £118,710 if notional interest was not extracted.

The Management and administration of Beach Huts is carried out in Community Services by the Head of Support Services and a job share administrative assistant. This equates to:

5% Band 7
20% Band 2

Beach Hut Wardening is currently carried out by Resources Directorate and equates to:

60% Band 2 - £20,000 (including recharge costs)

A Beach Hut Owners Association has been in operation for 10 years and consultation takes place as a two way process. A focus group has also been set up as part of this Review.

Relevant Town and Parish Councils are also partners in certain aspects of the Service.

The key stakeholder group are the Beach Hut Owners in this Review and wide consultation has taken place with them.

4.2 Beach Huts - Evaluation of Asset

4.2.1 The land on which they are sited belongs to the Council for which a site rental is charged. The site rental currently ranges from £217 at Barton on Sea to £254 at Calshot. The site rental at Barton, Calshot and Milford is a flat amount whereas at Hordle it is based on the size of the land occupied by the beach hut.

An additional premium of £80 is payable by non residents of the District.

4.2.2 A registration fee of £20 is currently charged to people selling their beach huts to cover administration costs. It is proposed to review this change to reflect the increased value of the beach huts. Site rental has increased beyond the rate of inflation for several years. It is proposed that for 2004/05 this purely attracts an inflationary increase and that the registration fee is increased to generate additional income. Research with other landlords has suggested that this change could be increased to between £400 and £500 and that a deed of assignment would be required to enable the site to be transferred to a new owner. The charge would have to be paid prior to the deed of assignment being released.

4.2.3 Other income generation opportunities are also being explored. One of these is the possibility of creating a waiting list for which a fee is charged for administration purposes.

- 4.2.4 Should it be decided that additional sites would be released, the Council could apply for planning permission, erect a beach hut and offer this for sale at a substantial profit currently beach hut owners are carrying out this practice and using the Council's asset as an income generating opportunity which needs to be managed.
- 4.2.5 The adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance has been mentioned earlier in the report. The specific implications for asset management are largely to do with the size and location of the "estate". Planning policy has always been based on the replacement of huts and the filling of small gaps. However, there was tension based around identifying appropriate gaps on an application by application basis. It was apparent that closer definition was needed. This is now the case and the locations for additional huts are defined and are very limited.

4.3 Keyhaven River - Management

- 4.3.1 Keyhaven River is a special place. It lies within an area of coast that is unspoilt and of great value to many interests. Keyhaven has many qualities ranging from the extent of sheltered water, which makes it so suitable for teaching youngsters sailing and canoeing, to the great wealth of nature conservation and landscape interest. It is also home to local commercial interests such as fishing, ferry and boatyard. In our work here we also need to be aware of what impact any proposals may have on local roads and the village environment.
- 4.3.2 The existing broad strategy has been to ensure the proper and controlled management of recreation on the Keyhaven River with particular reference to the needs of the environment and to provide access to water recreation for residents of the District at a reasonable price.
- 4.3.3 In practice, this has amounted to maintaining the status quo with no overall increase in the number of moorings; development of existing facilities or active promotion of the area.
- 4.3.4 This accords with the recommendations of the report on the Lymington to Keyhaven Coast - Policies for Future Management, published in March 1982; Hampshire County Council's "Strategic Guidance for the Solent", and New Forest District Council's corporate strategy "Heart of the Forest", District Local Plan and the non statutory "Coastal Management Plan". The immediate documents that state Council policy and its operational approach at Keyhaven are in the Leisure Portfolio Service Plan and the Keyhaven River Management Strategy. Both of the latter two plans have previous versions adopted by the Council. However, both have recently been reviewed and will shortly be the subject of a Portfolio Holder decision. In their forms, they very much endorse the themes of the approach.

4.3.5 Our management of the river benefits from the involvement of stakeholders through the Keyhaven River User Advisory Panel which considers issues related to the management, control and conservation of the Keyhaven River and its environs, including the provision of facilities.

The basic elements of management are:

a) The letting and administration of moorings and dinghy park spaces is undertaken with the help of a computer based system, operated at the Community Services office at Lyndhurst.

b) To maintain a presence at the Keyhaven office to provide an on-site information service to mooring holders and the public and to co-ordinate assistance to deal with any emergency or problem which might arise from time to time.

c) To make arrangements for the annual mooring inspection and maintenance programme, arrange the adequate supply for materials for that work to be carried out and ensure the availability of serviceable facilities by 31 March each year.

d) Launching fees and overnight mooring fees are collected by the River Wardens on an opportunity basis in particular at peak times during weekends and Bank holidays.

e) By frequent river patrols a general oversight is maintained in relation to the safety of boats, and monitoring of speed limits. Also a Marine Watch continues to be operated.

f) Licensing and inspection of small passenger vessels carrying not more than 12 passengers for hire or reward are part of the Warden's duties at Keyhaven and Lymington, although the need for this is reducing as more licensing arrangements are made by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

4.3.6 The River Warden is the only full-time employee at Keyhaven with a part-time Warden on 2 days a week between 1 April and 30 September each year, to cover rest days and annual leave. As mentioned earlier in the report, this is a very low level of staffing on site. This is supported by the comparator information. There is management time by the Assistant Director Leisure.

4.3.7 Administrative support is provided by staff within Community Services (equivalent to 0.25 FTE) at Lyndhurst and Financial Services at Lymington.

4.3.8 In the financial year 2003/04 the fees charged (January 2004) set out below:

Category	Fee
Waiting list : moorings and dinghy park	20.00
Licence fees (all moorings, including private)	56.55
Annual mooring fees	
Drying small	196.58
Drying large	216.72
Part drying	249.90
Deep Water	398.15
Wall mooring	118.41
Dinghy Park	118.41
Grass Bank	55.11
Fishermen's Trot	31.05
Keyhaven Sea Scouts Season launching	0
Launch: single under 12 feet	5.00
Launch: single 12 –16 feet	10.00
Launch: single 16 - 20 feet	15.00
Launch: over 20 feet	20.00
Launch: season under 12 feet	25:00
Launch: season 12 –16 feet	50:00
Launch: season 16 – 20 feet	75:00
Launch: season 20 feet	100:00
Non residents –plus 50%	
Anchorage: over night £5-10:00; Per week £12 – 20:00	

All mooring fees attract VAT.

4.4 Keyhaven River – Evaluation of Asset

4.4.1 The principal focus of this Review was the management of the River and Moorings. That is where the revenue costs lie and the generation of income on an annual basis.

- 4.4.2 There are other sources of income such as rentals from the Council's landholdings. These are: West Solent Boat builder's yard; the Clubhouses and dinghy parks of Keyhaven Yacht Club and Hurst Castle Sailing Club; the hall of Keyhaven Sea Scouts. There is a field the other side of the ancient highway that is in Council ownership but is grazed. Land at the base of Isley Point is in the nature reserve. These rentals are part of the income stream for the leisure portfolio. In addition, the Boatyard rents part of the car park through the winter and that income is part of the Environment Portfolio.
- 4.4.3 The rentals are negotiated by the Council's valuers and are set at market levels. The only exception to this is a lower rental set for the Sea Scouts due to their membership being predominantly young people.
- 4.4.4 No time was spent considering options to redevelop these sites for any other form of use – such as residential. This is because this has a very strong leisure and amenity value, provides jobs and contributes to what is the traditional pattern of use at Keyhaven. Also the Planning Policies for the area would preclude such a development. In a similar vein, enlarging the current buildings to increase rentals is possible only in minor details, there is already a great deal of concern about the River being at capacity, so the encouragement of further use being based here would be counter to leisure policy and the needs of the area.
- 4.4.5 One option that could be considered should the occasion arise, is the possibility of increasing the Council's presence on site. Utilising this office base as part of a greater co-ordination of wardens (an action in the Service Improvement Plan) would make sense.
- 4.4.6 The land asset at Keyhaven is strategic and very much under pressure. Any opportunities that arise to develop the Council's direct interest should be considered carefully, whether it be sites new to Council ownership or best use of sites currently in ownership. Sales or lease reviews, are obvious points where this should be considered.
- 4.4.7 On the matters that were reviewed, the basis of the Council's interest and powers come from its lease of the bed of the rivers and creeks, as well as the marshes. This gives management control where many sites do not – eg the ability to manage access as landowner as against via byelaws and the ability to charge for anchoring. The terms of the lease are not particularly explicit but they do require the Council to maintain the river for the benefit of local people, in a way that respects the nature of the area.

4.4.8 The thinking behind the balance of fees and charges as against other considerations is covered earlier in the report. In terms of the asset itself, the ability to moor a boat in the Solent is a facility in demand. The Council has a policy to only admit local people on the waiting list – keeping with the intentions of the lease. Part of the approach is to keep the mooring fees at a reasonable level, hence facilitating access by local people. Practice has been to be comparable to local facilities and therefore not be unreasonable in pricing. The Council could consider opening up the waiting list and increasing prices for a national market. This was discussed as part of the internal challenge within the group. It was dismissed as being inappropriate in the context of the tenure and policy aims.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

5.1 The Self Assessment Team consists of:

Councillor Barry Rickman – Portfolio Holder Leisure
Gary Foyle – Christchurch Borough Council (External Representative)
Jayne Broomfield – Community Services Admin
Louise Barton – Community Services Admin
Sharon Plumridge – Community Services
Anthony Wilkinson – River Warden, Keyhaven
Sue Worth – Audit Section
Tom Gibbons – Employee Side Representative
Keith Smith – Chief Executives, BV Mentor
Martin Devine – Leisure Services

- 5.2 Very few meetings of the wider Self Assessment Team have taken place, the smaller team of Martin Devine, Anthony Wilkinson, Jayne Broomfield, Louise Barton and Sharon Plumridge have met more frequently and Martin Devine and Sharon Plumridge have had working meetings on a regular basis.
- 5.3 The Review has been carried out using the four C's as a template but the EFQM criteria has also been used to allow a more comprehensive examination of the service which has resulted in several further areas for improvement being identified.
- 5.4 Key Stakeholders have been consulted on each aspect of the Service and their views have been taken into account when developing the Service Improvement Plan.
- 5.5 Performance Indicators have been developed which will be used to compare performance with external providers when finalised as part of the Service Improvement Plan.

5.6 The Best Value Review Board consists of:

Geoff Bettle – Review Board Leader
Cllr J A G Hutchins
Cllr Vincent
Chris Elliott – Planning Services
Ray Turner – Poole Borough Council (External Representative)

It was agreed that the Self Assessment Team should present the final report to the Review Board and should not undergo full verification.

6. REVIEW IN CONTEXT

- During the course of this review a new software system has been developed which will aid the accuracy of record keeping and will improve management information. This system will also be accessible by the River Warden at Keyhaven which is not currently possible.
- There has also been a restructure of the New Forest Beach Hut Owners Association with the appointment of a new Chair in April 2002. There is now a committee with representatives from each site enabling meetings to be more focussed which in turn has led to more issues being addressed and much better partnership working.
- Another development is that Direct Debit Payments for Beach Hut Site rental was introduced from 1 April 2003 to spread the cost of site rental for owners.

7. ACTIONS POINTS AND TARGETS

7.1# The action points and targets are contained in the Service Improvement Plan which is contained in Appendix 1.

8. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

8.1# The Best Value Workbook was used to undertake the sustainability assessment and is attached as Appendix 5.

8.2 The assessment process did underline the extent to which factors related to sustainability are part of service delivery, particularly at Keyhaven. The two aspects that suggest the need for further work are:

- a. Are beach hut licence holders involved enough in delivery – could there be more self help with schemes like Marine Watch developed in other areas.
- b. As operators, we may take aspects of the qualities of Keyhaven and the Beach Hut sites for granted. Information should be more readily available to licence holders, which provides the background to nature conservation and other designations for example. This could be done via newsletters / or information with the invoicing process.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As outlined in paragraph 2.1.2 Beach Hut and Keyhaven River fees and charges contributed a net £104,310 to the Council's overall income in 2002/03.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1# Aspects of this Review package have impacts on environmental issues; such as the design and operation of beach huts and the management of the extensive recreational demand at Keyhaven. These are highlighted in the Sustainability Assessment in Appendix 5.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 An independent security firm has recently been employed by the Council. Patrols take place on a regular basis and signs have been erected at each site. This has proved to be a deterrent to potential vandals. Marine Watch is currently in place at Keyhaven and is proving to be very successful. It is proposed to take a report to the Crime and Disorder Review Panel on the issues relating to Beach Huts and a PRIME initiative for Beach Huts is now in place which includes regular meetings with the Police, Parish and Town Councils, District Council and the Beach Hut Owners Association. Overall, vandalism is now reducing due to positive initiatives being taken.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1# That the Action plan for continuous improvement of the Keyhaven and Coast service as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
- 12.2 That those actions not requiring additional resources be implemented in accordance with the timetable.
- 12.3 That those actions requiring additional resources either be met by efficiency savings, or are not implemented until sufficient budgetary provision is provided.

[L:md:leisure:bv: Keyhaven and Coast – Board Report V10.doc]

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NFDC COAST AND KEYHAVEN REVIEW

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN: 2003 – 2008

PLAN PROGRESS AS AT: 02/10/02

1.IMPROVEMENT AREA: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
1.1	Create a beach strategic plan with the role of beach huts included and link to the corporate strategy [CHALL+ CONSULT]	No action Don't hang it all on beach hut owners – visitors are majority (Focus)	Produce a brief and produce the plan.	Create the Brief Produce the plan to include: Objectives, resources, environment, Maintenance, EU dimension, Action plan	11/2003 04/2004	SP	Time. Action Plan may need
1.2	Continue to produce the River Management Plan but make it more widely known [CONSULT]		Revise Plan post adoption of Review. Ensure points of interest are included: crime, pollution, habitat, access.	Comprehensive plan. Awareness rating via survey Reflects designations	09/2003 06/2004 & 06/2006	MD	Time Action may need
1.3	Creation of more telling links to Corporate direction [CHALL]		Seek to influence the next version of HOF to be more useful in establishing policy and steering direction	Links between levels of policy. Staff survey.	06/2003 3/2007	MD SP	Time
1.4	Assess the policy base in the operation of these service in respect of residents / non residents; age profile, cost recovery, continuity of occupation		Cabinet resolution arising out of this Improvement Plan.	Relationship to service and corporate policies. Any related implications understood.	11/2003	MD SP	Time

1.IMPROVEMENT AREA: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES contd.

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
1.5	Make more effort to ensure key stakeholders are aware of policy documents – both internal and external to NFDC [SURV]	No action yet	Create a list for the distribution of future plans. Include the planning of communication in all productions. More pro-active use of www and email groups Direct meetings with key agencies where closer tie needed – Town and Parish Councils and English Nature are priority. Devise “induction” material.	Greater awareness shown in surveys Meetings held Material available	06/2005 and 06/2008 10/2003 03/2004	Team	Time & print costs
1.6	Utilise the Cultural Strategy as a means to communicate with stakeholders and help the revision of service plans. [SURV]	No action yet	New service plans for element of this package with no plan or plan out of date.	Cultural strategy exists Service Plans exist	12/03 08/03	MD Team	Print Budget for both
1.7	The need for a more cohesive framework for corporate and service planning [ops]	Input to corporate review	Establish and make all team aware of a policy and performance review framework	Framework in place	06/03	MD	
1.8	Increased member involvement in direction setting [CHALL]	Past inclusion in plan preparation	Take to a new level with a deeper and continuing involvement. Consider external inputs at the same time.	Survey of member satisfaction.	10/2004	MD	Time

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.1	Explore the role of alternative service provider options at Keyhaven [CHALL + CONSULT]	Initial contact with comparators.	Assess the options for Keyhaven.	Clear review paper against set criteria.	09/2004	MD	Time & travel cost
2.2	Communication with stakeholders for information and awareness. [CHALL + CONSULT]	Created initial list of possibilities and sought comment on them: Exhibitions; newsletter; media contacts	Adopt principles. Identify list of possibilities.	Produce information sheet Outcomes reflect survey information (Customers)	03/2004 03/2008	Team	Time & print cost
2.3	Coastal wardening [CONSULT]	No action to date Warden: presence – immediate maintained – profile to be of value - unsocial hours (Focus)		Issue assessed	06/2003	MD	None at this time
2.4	Vandalism and crime [CONSULT]	Examine comparator authorities for good practice.	Include on Community Safety Panel Involve users Devise specific actions within Service Plan.	Resolution that reflects needs and involves partner agencies. Outcomes reflect survey information. Outcomes monitored.	10/2003 10/2003 Annual		

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES cont'd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.5	Ensure more involvement of users in stewardship [CHAL + SUST]	Marine Watch at Keyhaven	Identify scope for expansion using the consultative / networking arrangements that are in place.	Focus Group item	09/2005	MD SP	Time and support costs
2.6	Maintenance of beach infrastructure [FOCUS]	Current maintenance activity.	Establish a programme. Relate to more evident warden activity.	Survey results	06/2004 06/2008	MD SP	Current budget
2.7	Signage programme for health and safety [OPS]	Reviewed key information that is required for health and safety signage	Establish intended programme	Signs in place	06/2003 and ongoing	MD	Current budget
2.8	Performance indicators [CHALL]	Devised interim performance measures Established initial benchmarking arrangements and encouraged others to begin to develop	Create a comprehensive set of indicators	Full set of indicators for all strands of the service	03/2004	Team	Time
2.9	Waste: enforcement and collection system (FOCUS)	Part Waste Management Plan	Higher level of involvement from coastal warden role. Inclusion in reviews of waste collection and enforcement.	Revised adapted for Waste Management Plan Survey	11/2003 06/2004	SP	Time & print cost.

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES cont'd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.10	The relationship with Council members needs development [OPS]	Initial discussion with the Portfolio holder and Leisure Review Panel	Survey of new members. Agree way of working together	Survey response Action Plan	04/2004 07/2004	Team	
2.11	Review car park fees – concession or free for beach hut owners and mooring holders. (Focus)	Traffic management scheme out to consultation.	Review post this exercise		12/2003	MD SP	
2.12	More frequent beach grading (flexible) (Focus)		Raise with Coast Group over feasibility. Report back findings to BHOA	Include in Shoreline Management Plan. Any resultant management action is identified.	06/2003	SP	
2.13	Safeguard / improve natural habitat [CONSULT & SUST]	Current policy of restraint. Some limited vegetation work at Barton	Approach HWT / EN to ascertain possibilities for site management statements. Create proposals for wider discussion. Assess cost and management implications	Planned approach. Subject to consultation. Meet all permissions.	03/2006	MD	
2.14	Management of water craft from beaches. [FOCUS]	Some physical works	Direct action at identified sites: Calshot and Milford, within a management plan. Inclusion of information within beach hut terms and conditions.	Number of complaints	06/2004	MD	Time & budget for works

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES cont'd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.15	Enforce poor huts and abandoned / little used craft (CONSULT)	Current procedure. Identified evident cases and followed up. Relate to coastal warden role	Review procedures and inform all owners and holders. More vigorous application of terms and conditions	Number of complaints	09/2003	Team	Time
2.16	Toilets open + maintained all year (porta loos?) (Focus)	Passed on request	Include in Service Plan for beach huts and ensure inclusion in Strategy for Public Conveniences	Rating on cleanliness improves	11/2003	SP	May be a need
2.17	Number and emptying of litter + dog bins (Focus)	Include as part of work plan for coastal warden role	Assess provision. Make recommendations for action.	Produce findings	09/2003	SP	
2.18	Make more use of all Wardens active on the coast [SURVEY]		Bring site wardens together to discuss the potential. Include in an assessment of warden roles. Include in comparator work.	Meeting Comparators Surveys of partner agencies. Customer feedback	04/2004 09/2004 06/2005 On going		
2.19	Investigate process and admin issues arising out of licence holder survey [SURVEY]	Producing new ICT system	RE-look at returns expressing dissatisfaction and cross tab to other features. Address known issues from survey: allocation policy, update on progress of allocations, degree of notice.	Improvements to known shortfalls. Further assessment post allocations Satisfaction scores via surveys	10/2003 03/2003 06/2004/06/08		
2.20	Regular surveys of beach hut owners and mooring holders	Survey with this Review	Regular programme.	BV guidance suggests every 2 years	09/2004/6/8	MD SP	Time & print cost

2. EFFECTIVENESS / SERVICE DELIVERY OUTCOMES cont'd

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
2.21	Create more effective team focus [OPS]	Established the need via the review	Set up a standing arrangement with additional attendance as required (eg finance)	Employee survey outcomes	06/2004	Team	Time
2.22	Third party endorsement of approach [OPS]	Identified need for review. Revised procedure notes	Explore if Chartermark is relevant	Assessment	04/2004	Team	Time
2.23	Increase partnership working with affected agencies eg Cadland Estate, neighbouring authorities.		Identify this action in detail in the Service Plans	Action elements in Service Plan	09/2003	MD SP	Time

3. COST EFFICIENCY

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
3.1	Improve net cost performance [CHALL]	Budget assessment and comparator work as outlined below.	A dimension to include in options appraisal. View on charging policy.	Net cost target improvements met: 2003/04	09/2004	Team	6%
3.2	Investigate and determine direct and indirect costs. Use these in assessment of performance. [CHALL & FOCUS]	Request made of finance services	Identify position. Use in comparison work.	Clear position. Clear and useful comparisons	09/2004	Team	Time & may impact on net cost.
3.3	Performance indicators to integrate with Service delivery [COMPARE]	Devised interim performance measures Established initial benchmarking arrangements and encouraged others to begin to develop	Create a comprehensive set of indicators	Full set of indicators for all strands of the service	04/2004	Team	Time
3.4	Use best practice that is evidenced from comparators [OPS+ CHALL + COMPARE]		Arrange visits to / information exchange with best practice agencies.	Input to customer service actions		Team	Time and travel
3.5	Seek further opportunities to extend partnership income [OPS AND CHALL]		Include in options appraisal.	Equivalent of 2% pa of current key partner investment	2007 with annual review	Team	

3. COST EFFICIENCY

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
3.6	Visitor Payback [FOCUS]	Visitor moorings have been discussed before.	Consider means by which this may be increased. Approach Community Tourism Groups where relevant	Increased income. Environment not compromised.	09/2004	Team	Income
3.7	Use of ICT could be improved. [OPS]	Records system being changed.	Investigate use of GIS and digital camera (student placement?)	Part of corporate GIS programme Integration of digital images to computer records of sites and craft	04/2007 04/2004	MD MD	Need bid Time

4. QUALITY

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
4.1	Regular collection of satisfaction data from stakeholders [CONS& OPS]	Started with this consultation plan for the Review	Programme a second and third consultation plan in the five year programme	Implement plan	09/04 09/06		
4.2	Address employee issues over work conditions and practices [OPS+ CONS]	Identified the issues – support, clarity of admin systems, clarity of responsibilities	Include in review of wardening and in options appraisal / comparator work	Employee survey	2006	Team	

5. FAIR ACCESS

No.	Improvement area	What have we done?	What else needs to be done?	Performance measure / target	Key date Priority	Who	£
5.1	Inclusion of clear diversity and equal opportunities statements in all plans [SUST]	Highlighted the issue. Explored links to corporate work	Devise elements for inclusion. Training programme Partner involvement	Inclusion in text All employees	11/2003 2003/4	Team	
5.2	The age profile of users is weighted towards older people – is enough recognition of their needs? [SURVEY]	Discussion on a one to one basis	Consider an access audit. Include in Service Plan	Content of plan	11/2003	Team	Capital likely after audit.
5.3	Availability of information [CHALL]	Started the development of ICT	Ensure there is the offer of all key documents in alternative media to print. Devise an electronic method of transacting the service	Alternative media version available for all key documents. E based allocations and waiting lists	04/2004 04/2005	Team	Existing budget Need bid to ICT