

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 6 August 2014)

1. ELING TIDE MILL AND LEARNING CENTRE (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 18)

This Council, together with Totton and Eling Town Council, has been successful in Round 2 of the bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for work to restore Eling Tide Mill and to develop the learning centre. The scheme also seeks to enhance the links between the buildings and the surrounding landscape. The grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund is for £1,379,300. With contributions from this Council, the Town Council, volunteers and other external sources the total budget for the project is £1,657,675. The work will be carried out over the next 3-4 years, with the exact timetable and consequent cash flow still to be finalised.

The Tide Mill is a nationally significant and rare building and the recognition of its importance, and of the need to preserve and enhance this asset is very welcome.

In order to secure the grant funding the Council had to respond to the offer within 28 days. Consequently, the Executive Director (Finance), following consultations with the Health & Leisure and Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holders, had already formally accepted the grant on the Authority's behalf. The conditions attached to the grant are set out in the offer letter from the Heritage Lottery Fund which is attached as Appendix 1 to Report A to the Cabinet. The conditions include the appointment of an accountable body and the Cabinet proposes that this Council should take on that role.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Council act as the accountable body for the delivery of the Eling Tide Mill and Learning Centre project at an estimated total budget cost of £1,657,675 and acknowledges the grant conditions and responsibilities related to the award from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £1,379,300

2. BEACH HUTS AT MILFORD ON SEA (WESTOVER) (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 19)

On 4 June 2014 (Minute 4 refers), the Cabinet had considered a detailed report on the best way forwards in respect of the beach huts at Westover, Milford on Sea, which had been lost, already removed because of structural instability, or damaged to a lesser extent by the severe storm on 14 February 2014. In the light of the representations from a number of beach hut owners, who believed that their individual huts were not so badly damaged that they could not be repaired, the Cabinet requested that further survey work should be carried out to establish the physical condition of individual beach huts. That survey work has now been completed and the surveyor's report received. A summary is attached as Appendix 1 to Report B to the Cabinet. The consultant surveyors have concluded that all the huts are beyond economic repair.

Separately, a company specialising in construction in coastal situations has been commissioned to develop conceptual designs and financial estimates for the replacement of the beach huts in this area. The design brief includes the requirement that the height of the beach huts should not be increased (to safeguard

the views of cliff top residents) and that a minimum of 119 huts (the same as the original total on this site) would be needed.

Rather than replacing on a like for like basis in terms of construction methods and materials, the Cabinet support the recommendation that a more robust construction, more resistant to potential storm conditions, should be used. There is no space to install a wave wall to dissipate the force of the wave action in this area, but the enhanced construction should be able to resist the forces experienced in the storm of 14 February. All of the options under consideration include rebuilding the concrete slab on which the huts are placed to ensure the integrity of the slab foundations of the new huts. At this stage the only issues that have been considered are the engineering constraints. Aesthetic and design considerations can be developed later, in consultation with interested parties, including representation from the beach hut owners.

The existing beach hut licence holders will be requested to enter into an agreement to contribute towards the cost of the replacement of their hut, with their contribution to be the cost that would have been incurred if their current hut had been repaired, up to a maximum of £3,832 plus VAT (currently 20%), which is also the sum that will be charged if the hut has already been removed or lost from the site. Where the current hut owner would have difficulty in finding their contribution as a lump sum the Council will enter into a constructive dialogue with them to agree way forwards. The estimated cost to this Council of pursuing the enhanced construction option is £375,000 for site clearance and coast protection works (some of which might be reclaimable from government); and £454,193 for the construction of the replacement huts, assuming a contribution of £429,877 from the beach hut owners.

Subject to a representative of the beach hut owners being involved in the development of the design brief and planning consent being obtained before any contract is let for site clearance, the beach hut owners are largely supportive of the course of action now proposed. Although some huts could be repaired, it is accepted that, for the wider good, the replacement of all huts with new ones of enhanced materials and design, has merits. It is the Cabinet's view that, should it be impossible to implement the current proposal for replacement, other options will have to be explored, with the starting position being the repair of the huts that remain. The removal of the huts, without replacement, is not a realistic option.

The Cabinet consider that there is some urgency to this process, in order to have the new huts on site and in use for the 2015 summer. Consequently, they do not support Milford on Sea Parish Council's suggestion that there should be a wider consultation on options for the future of the sea front at Milford on Sea. As there are no draft proposals in place to form the basis of the consultation it would inevitably be a lengthy process to try to reconcile the very diverse viewpoints that would come forwards in response to an open ended consultation.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That a project be developed for the replacement of the concrete slab of the existing promenade, as a coastal protection scheme, with a budget provision of £225,000;**
- (b) A project be developed for the rebuilding of all the beach huts using reinforced concrete and with a gross budget provision of £884,070 to include estimated contributions from the beach hut owners of £429,877;**

- (c) That following the gaining of planning permission for the replacement of the beach huts all remaining concrete huts at Milford on Sea be demolished, but not before that time, and a budget provision of £150,000 be provided for site clearance ; and**
- (d) That each beach hut licence holder be offered the opportunity to sign up to the Council rebuilding the huts as set out above, to include agreement on the individual contribution payable by them.**

**Councillor B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**