

BEACH HUTS AT MILFORD ON SEA (WESTOVER)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following the report that was presented to Cabinet on 6 August 2014 and the decision to replace the beach huts significant progress has been made on the appointment of a design consultant and the development of options to be considered for public engagement. This report aims to present the options that were taken forward to the public meeting held on 14 August 2015 and to recommend the option to be taken forward to detailed design.

1.2 A procurement process was undertaken for the design and contract management for the replacement of 119 huts. This contract was awarded to Ramboll Uk, with Snug Architects as their partner, who have taken the lead in the development of this stage to take the project brief and work this into a number of options to be presented for consideration. The options have been developed in consideration of discussions and meetings undertaken with:-

- Project Working Group
- Project Board
- Beach Hut Owners Technical Group

1.3 It was identified within these discussions that, rather than developing three distinct options, there were four main design areas, each with different options, to take into account within the options development. These could be presented as a “pick and mix” to enable the best option for the project to be taken forward.

- Site layout – there were three different options to consider with regard to the linear layout of the beach hut terraces and their positioning along the lower promenade.
- Beach hut position – to consider the position of the huts in relation to the lower promenade and where they were previously located.
- Roof form – there were three different options to consider with regard to the form of the roof - tessellated, inhabited or mono pitch.
- Beach hut frontage – to consider possible options for the materials and colouring of the hut facades.

1.4 As well as the beach hut design issues identified above, consideration has also been given to the form of the access ramp at the western end of the promenade. There were three options on how this access point could best be developed to make more efficient use of the space, existing structures and viewing opportunities at this location.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Following the Project Board meeting of 14 July 2015 it was agreed that a public engagement event would be held on 14 August at the Milford - on - Sea Community Centre where the Project Team and design team would present the concept designs to be considered for the replacement of the beach huts. The aim of the meeting was for local residents, visitors and hut licence holders to have the opportunity to view the concept designs, through presentation boards, presentations made by the architect

and in discussion with the team. The event was aimed to receive feedback on the various designs and was not to be used as a mechanism to vote.

- 2.2 In advance of the event press releases were issued, with subsequent articles being published by the Lymington Times and the Southampton Evening Echo. Further advertising of the event was undertaken through social media and the NFDC website, along with local advertising with the assistance from the Parish Council. Wave 105 Radio also ran a story on their news programmes during the day on the 14 August.
- 2.3 To enable feedback from those viewing the concept designs a questionnaire was developed using the SNAP software, enabling responses to be entered either directly via the NFDC website or by transposing information provided on a hard copy of the questionnaire.
- 2.4 It was made clear at the event that the questionnaire was designed to obtain the views of the respondents to the design options and was not a ballot on the options to be taken forward to detailed design. The responses received were used by the Project Board to help guide the decision to be made on the options to be taken forward, in consideration of budget, engineering requirements and the project brief.
- 2.5 A number of the questions within the questionnaire enable respondents to provide “free-text” comments, of which a significant number were made. The themes that have been identified within these comments have been considered by the Project Board to inform the recommendation made on the options to be taken forward to detailed design and the planning application. These comments have also been passed through to the design team and will also be used to aid the final design.
- 2.6 An internet link was also provided at www.newforest.gov.uk/beachhuts to enable access to all of the public event material as well as to enable completion of on-line questionnaire. The meeting was scheduled to commence from 12 noon to 8pm to cater for those people who were working or unavailable during the day. Local Residents started arriving at 11.30 to view the proposals.
- 2.7 Those attending were Councillor Sophie Beeton, Colin Read and Steve Cook NFDC (Chris Elliot and Dave Yates for part) Paul Bulkeley from Snug Architects and Helen Baker from Ramboll and Colin Holdsworth from New Forest Beach Hut Owners Association (NFBHOA).
- 2.8 It was intended that Snug Architects would give formal presentations at 1pm, 3.30pm and 5.30pm. However, due to the number of people attending, the first presentation started at 12.10pm followed by another 5 presentations throughout the day, 3 more than expected. It is estimated that circa 600 people attended the event over an 8 hour period.
- 2.9 The design options under consideration can be viewed by following the above link.

3. EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

- 3.1 The closing date for questionnaire responses was Monday 24 August at midday. The total number of responses received was 355. Of these 6 were received at the event of the 14 August, 36 by post and 319 on line. Of the total responses 114 identified themselves as beach hut licence holders.

3.2 A summary of all of the responses received to the questions that required a choice selection is available at www.newforest.gov.uk/beachhuts.

3.2.1 In response to the question: What do you think are important considerations for the design? The majority of respondents said that they considered overall appearance to be most important.

3.3.2 With regard to the different site layout options, which were:

- Layout A – Similar to the previous layout
- Layout B - Improved views at key focal points on the promenade.
- Layout C – Removal of huts at the eastern end

The Beach Hut Board considered on balance that, although layout B was the preferred site layout, in discussion with the design team it was not the most appropriate. The Board considers that layout C should be recommended to be taken forward in the design option, based on the following reasons:

- Beach huts located at the eastern position are at greater risk of wave impact damage. This has further been confirmed through overtopping analysis undertaken for initial concept designs by CH2MHILL, where values of 38l/s/m have been calculated for the eastern end of the site and 10l/s/m for the western end. This is compared to a rate of 1l/s/m at which damage may start to occur.
- Construction costs will be reduced by locating all huts within the same promenade area.
- As identified within the presentation, layout C enables the eastern section of the promenade to provide enhanced views and increased public access to this area of the beach.

3.2.3 The question that asked the public to consider the options for the positioning of the beach huts and alterations to the promenade identified that almost 2/3 preferred the inhabited roof. Further consideration by the Project Board has decided that both of these options (inhabited roof and a wider lower promenade) should be taken forward to the preferred option.

3.2.4 The question relating to the roof form probably resulted in the greatest amount of discussion and debate at the public event and Project Board meeting. The majority of responses to this question identified that the inhabited roof was preferred as the roof form. The least favoured option was for the mono pitch roof form.

3.2.5 Further to the question on roof form, the authority has sought Counsel's advice with regard to the current licence conditions and the option of the inhabited roof for the upper promenade. This has been received as:

If the Council decided in favour of the design under which the public could walk on the roofs of beach huts there is no legal basis on which a site licence holder of a beach hut could seek an injunction to restrain the public from standing on the roof. No changes to the site licence conditions are required to permit this.

Licence holders who do not like the design need not take up their licences but since the huts are regarded as investments this seems an unlikely outcome.

The site licensee of a beach hut would be under no liability if some mishap befell a person standing on the roof of that hut (e.g. they fell off). The Council would need to ensure it had its own public liability insurance in place to cover such eventualities as the matter would be one for the Council.

- 3.2.6 After careful consideration, the Beach Hut Board recommends that the inhabited roof is taken forward as the preferred option.
- 3.3 The Beach Hut Board considered the different materials and finishes that could be applied to the frontages. The overwhelming response from the public was that concrete with coloured doors was preferred. The board therefore recommends that concrete frontages are taken forward as the preferred option.
- 3.4 Respondents were asked to consider the access ramp at the western end of the promenade and the possible improvements that could be made to this. The majority of responses identified that a curved ramp around the pill box structure was much preferred, this was supported by the Board as the preferred option.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The approved budget for the beach hut replacement scheme was set at the Cabinet meeting of 6 August 2014 as £1,259,000.
- 4.2 Based on the recommended option to be taken forward the design team have provided a pre-tender estimate of the costs, this is put at £1,064,000 (an allowance of +20% to be allowed for contingency). At this preliminary stage of the project the estimated costs are:

Site clearance	£124,000	(actual)
Design services	£124,000	(tendered sum)
Site investigation	£20,000	(estimate)
Beach hut rebuild	£1,064,000	(pre-tender estimate, includes slab replacement and improved access ramp)
Total	<u>£1,332,000</u>	

- 4.3 The current estimated cost against the approved budget indicates a pre-tender estimate of £1,332,000 which is £73,000 higher than the original budget forecast.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The need to withstand the coastal climate at this location is a key factor in the design process.
- 5.2 The Beach Hut Board considered the coastal conditions, including wave strengths, when considering and making the decision of site location as identified in section 3.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

8. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS

I am pleased to recommend to Cabinet what I believe to be an innovative design that will enhance Milford seafront. We have worked very hard with the design team to come up with a viable solution which takes account of the challenging coastal environment and the preferences of local residents and the beach hut license holders.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Beach Hut Board considered all the options presented to them, including all of the information received following the public meeting held on the 14 August. The options recommended to Cabinet to allow Ramboll and Snug to continue with the detailed design works are

- Inhabited roof enabling the lower promenade to be widened
- Concrete Frontages to all of the 119 huts
- Layout C, no huts situated at the eastern end of the lower promenade
- A curved access ramp at the western end of the promenade

10. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet approve that the following options be taken forward as the preferred option for the design of the 119 replacement Beach Huts at Milford on Sea and that the design team progress this option through to detailed design, planning application submission and tender construction stage.

- Inhabited roof enabling the lower promenade to be widened
- Concrete Frontages to all of the huts
- Layout C no huts situated at the eastern end of the lower promenade
- A curved access ramp at the western end of the promenade

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- a. Presentation Material
- b. Public Event Questionnaire
- c. Summary Report of all Responses Received