

# Beach Hut Policy

3 March 2025

## 1. The Policy

1.1 The main aims of the Policy are:

1.2 To continue to provide a popular, accessible amenity that enables residents and visitors to enjoy the Dover District beaches and coastline safely, whilst promoting wellbeing. It will aim to provide a consistent approach to the charging, use, management and maintenance of beach huts within the Dover District so that they are used in a safe, respectful and sustainable manner. This Policy will be delivered alongside the Kingsdown & Walmer Beach Local Wildlife Site Management Plan 2024-2029 (approved by Cabinet October 2024), which aims to conserve and enhance the rare, vegetated shingle habitat, and raise awareness about its importance with residents and visitors alike.

1.3 The Council will aim to effectively manage the beach huts alongside the provision of boat plots and other amenities and services offered on Council owned land along its' coastline.

1.4 Waiting lists for beach huts have been closed for a number of years, some applicants having been on them for decades and are still waiting for a beach hut. Demand for beach huts within the district remains high despite economic pressures. It is the Council's aim to make beach huts more accessible by providing new shorter-term leases (3 years) to enable more residents and visitors to benefit from their use and allow the Council to reopen the waiting lists. With a new lease agreement in place any issues around appearance, unauthorised extensions or use can be effectively managed by the Council.

1.5 The Council's aim is to receive income through the effective management of the beach huts and to identify potential areas to increase the Council's beach hut stock to allow it to meet demand.

1.6 We aim to retain the unique appearance and appeal of the beach huts and ensure they contribute positively to the local area and environment in which they are based. Depending on the location (on a case by case basis) the Council may use

the same or differing style of huts and will paint huts using a single or limited palette of colours. This will ensure the huts are in keeping with the local area (which varies by location).

## **2. Consultation**

2.1 The following teams and groups were consulted on the proposed policy:

2.2 Property Assets Team

2.3 Legal Team

2.4 Corporate Services (Equality)

2.5 Natural Environments Manager

2.6 Principal Information Governance Officer (GDPR)

## **3. Monitoring and Implementation**

3.1 A formal review of the Policy will be conducted every 3 years or where changes to legislation and / or regulation require an immediate review. If the Policy is approved for use, the next expected review will be 2028.

3.2 A copy of the Policy will be provided online via our website for all potential tenants to access. Alternative forms of communication can be provided where requested.

## **4. Equality Impact Assessment**

4.1 In accordance with our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (Appendix 2) has been completed and has identified that two protected characteristics; age and disability are impacted (primarily due to mobility issues).

4.2 The proposed Policy aims to enable people to have access to beach huts within the Dover District, regardless of age or disability. Beach Huts across the district are all currently located on shingle beach, making access challenging for those with mobility issues. Access varies by location, however, DDC will prioritise and facilitate improved access (when allocating) for those with mobility issues wherever possible (i.e. give priority access to huts closest to hard landscape/ access points to reduce travel distances).

## **5. Identification of Options**

5.1 Option 1 – Cabinet agrees to the recommendations in this report and approves and adopts the Policy

5.2 Option 2 – Cabinet does not agree to the recommendations within this report.

## **6. Evaluation of Options**

6.1 Option 1 - Is the preferred option as adopting this policy will provide a consistent approach to the management and use of its' beach huts and provide a process for future expansion of this service, subject to any required permissions.

6.2 Option 2 – Is not the preferred option as it does not provide a sound base to develop the future management and use of beach huts within the district.

## **7. Resource Implications**

7.1 There are no resource implications associated with the adoption of this Policy as it will be managed using existing resource within Property Assets.

7.2 Provision of new any new huts will be subject to a separate Cabinet report to draw down the appropriate budget allocation within the MTFP.

## **8. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

8.1 No implications or impacts have been identified in the preparation of this report or the development of the proposed policy that will affect climate change or the environment.

8.2 Any new beach huts that are provided (subject to a separate Cabinet report) by DDC will be made from timber from certified sustainable sources (FSC).

## **9. Corporate Implications**

9.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): 'Accountancy have been consulted and have no further comment to add (MB)'

9.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in preparation of this report and has no further comments to make. (AJ)

9.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: As noted at paragraph 6.1 the adoption of this policy could potentially have a negative impact on two protected characteristic groups. Proposals to prioritise and facilitate improved access in an attempt to mitigate these impacts are detailed in the Equality Impact Assessment with the overall impact of each protected characteristic remaining high (disability) and medium (age). This is due to the topography of the beach huts (located on shingle beach) rather than the policy itself and it is noted that in the EIA it is stated that priority to more accessible huts (those closer to hard landscapes/access points) will be given to those with mobility issues wherever possible. However, wheelchair access will be considerably constrained due to the shingle. The Equality Officer has been consulted during the development of this report and no further comments to make, other than to remind Members that in discharging their responsibilities they are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>.