

# Chichester District Council

**CABINET**

**5 September 2023**

## **Repair of Timber Access Ramp, East Beach, Selsey**

### **1. Contacts**

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#### **Cabinet Member:**

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### **2. Recommendation**

#### **2.1 That Cabinet:**

- (a) Allocates £51,000 from general fund reserves for repairs to the ramp.**
- (b) Notes that from 2025-26 revenue budget growth of £7,000 per year will be required to enable on-going surveying, and repair and maintenance of the ramp.**
- (c) Notes that any further essential repairs that cannot be accommodated within the repairs and maintenance budget will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.**
- (d) Requests that officers seek support for on-going revenue costs from Selsey Town Council and other interested stakeholders.**

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Defra Coastal Change Pathfinder funding was used to re-instate a public access ramp for the benefit of the town and its visitors on Council registered land at East Beach, Selsey in 2011. This Pathfinder funding, which supported coastal communities in adapting to coastal change and regeneration to ensure they remain economically attractive and viable, focused on Selsey's tourism opportunity as a diving destination. The wooden structure construction costs were £141k. No revenue costs for repair and maintenance were identified at the construction stage. The ramp now requires repairs.

- 3.2 There is no requirement on the council to provide access ramps to the sea, however, as the council constructed the ramp it is a council asset under the Crown Foreshore Lease. The lease requires the Council “*to keep all works on the premises in good repair/condition*”, and therefore the council is responsible for ongoing maintenance or subsequent removal. As the occupier of the foreshore, there is liability under occupiers’ duty of care and defects could expose the council to claims.
- 3.3 There is no means to measure the usage of the ramp, however having spoken with local dive companies, ward members and Selsey Town Council, anecdotally, it is a facility that, if it was removed, would be likely to have an unforeseen adverse impact on the economy and tourism of Selsey. It is understood that the reinstatement of the ramp in 2011 was based on evidence gathered while developing the East Beach Masterplan 2009. The ramp is considered to be a key tourism asset, maintaining Selsey as key dive destination. Although it is understood that no dive boat is currently based in Selsey, various clubs visit Selsey, staying for 2-3 days, launching 2-9 boats, with repeated daily launches. It is also understood that dive customers stay in local accommodation and use the local dive shops to provide air refills and equipment. It is known that the ramp is also used by angling societies, recreational fisherman and the public who launch small private craft. The council currently uses the ramp to track large plant on to the foreshore for annual coast defence works however alternatives are available.
- 3.4 There are 9 slipways in Selsey however only this one is accessible to the public due to construction/condition and shingle. There are, however, slipways at other coastal villages and within Chichester Harbour, some of which are available free of charge.
- 3.5 The ramp is routinely inspected by the council’s Foreshore team and this year a structural defect was identified. Consultants, Royal Haskoning DHV were commissioned to undertake a structural survey, load analysis and provide repair options. These repairs are estimated to cost up to £51k. However, there is a potential for cost savings if this work can be aligned to routine coastal maintenance works planned for October 2023, with a decision required by early-September 2023.
- 3.6 Routine maintenance increases during the life of a coastal asset but it is difficult to say by how much and due to the hostile environment, erosion will continue, and repairs will most likely become more frequent. Future repairs and maintenance of this asset are currently unbudgeted however, regular structural surveys at additional cost (£5-7k/survey) are recommended with future repair proposals returning to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.7 At a point in time, repairs will not be effective, and the ramp will need to be closed to the public due to its condition reducing its safe load capacity. The Council will continue to monitor and at end of life, will consider removal and replacement options. Given there are currently no known grants available, future replacement will likely require additional capital budget at end of life (between 2031 and 2036). One option may be the future sea defence project in Selsey which may give the local community an opportunity to replace the access ramp, subject to funding being available as the ramp is not a coastal defence asset and therefore Grant in Aid would not be applicable.

#### **4. Outcomes to be Achieved**

- 4.1 To maintain the ramp so it can be used by tourism businesses, the general public and the Council.

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1 To allocate £51,000 from reserves for a one-off repair so that the ramp can achieve its full design life.
- 5.2 From 2025/26 budget, to increase the annual revenue budget by £7,000 for on-going structural surveys to assess safe operational capacity. The frequency of surveys will be dependent on the condition of the structure. Initially the ramp may require surveys biannually, but this will increase to annually as it nears the end of its useful life).
- 5.3 To seek support for on-going revenue costs from Selsey Town Council and other stakeholders.

#### **6. Alternatives Considered**

- 6.1 To not repair the ramp and to monitor its structure stability until it needs to be taken out of use and subsequently removed or replaced at a cost of approx £200,000 (current prices). This would expose the council to health and safety risks and potential liabilities as the structure owner and maintainer, although this risk will be minimised by regular inspection and structural surveys which will result in it being taken out of use at an appropriate time.

#### **7. Resource and Legal Implications**

- 7.1 On-going monitoring of the ramp can be undertaken by existing foreshore staff. Consultant engineers will be engaged to undertake a load capacity survey on a regular basis based on risk. Repair works would be undertaken by a suitably experienced marine contractor and supervised by Coastal Partners.

#### **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 No consultation is necessary at this stage.

#### **9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks**

- 9.1 In the event that the ramp was no longer available for use, the current users would need to find an alternative ramp to launch. Repairs on this occasion will raise the expectation that the council will continue to repair the ramp and to ultimately replace it. If the ramp was to fail structurally, there is a risk of civil claims against the council although this risk can be mitigated by regular monitoring. Under the Crown Foreshore Lease we have a responsibility to keep the land and assets safe for the public.

## 10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		X
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation</b>		X
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b>		X
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		X
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>		X
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		X
<b>Other</b> (please specify)		X

## 11. Appendix

None

## 12. Background Papers

12.1 The Coastal Change Pathfinder Project, Cabinet 7 June 2011