

Chichester District Council

CABINET

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Shingle Grading at Bracklesham Beach

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

2.1 That Cabinet considers the options for shingle grading at Bracklesham beach identified in paragraphs 5.1 – 5.8 below and approves its preferred option.

3 Background

- 3.1 The foreshore at Bracklesham has a shingle beach. The shingle protects the town from coastal flooding and is replenished as part of the beach management plan to maintain it as a sea defence. The Foreshore service, when it operated safety boats, graded the shingle daily between Easter and end of August to enable boat launching, and the local community have grown accustomed to improved pedestrian access from this grading activity.
- 3.2 In December 2023 Cabinet approved a new inspection-based Foreshore service, recognising that in its previous form certain activities resulted in potential risks to the Council giving rise to safety concerns. It was also noted that shingle clearance was a discretionary activity. The council no longer has the necessary plant and equipment with which to grade the shingle.
- 3.3 Since the December 2023 Cabinet decision, East Wittering and Bracklesham Parish Council have requested that grading is undertaken periodically throughout the year for improved pedestrian access. It should be noted that grading does not provide suitable access to persons in wheelchairs, for buggies, and other physical disabilities. In addition, many beach users access the shoreline at different points along the shingle and choose not to use the graded area.
- 3.4 In a dynamic, natural environment, the efforts of grading the beach will quickly be eroded by the sea and officers' experience is that the tides and any stormier weather will quickly remove the grading.

4 Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 To consider the benefits to beach users of grading the shingle at Bracklesham, taking into account cost and frequency of grading works required.

5 Proposal – There are two options for consideration.

5.1 Option 1 – No grading of the beach at Bracklesham

- 5.2 The area will be left for nature to take its natural course, except on the very limited occasions when coastal protection vehicles or other service vehicles need to gain access to the beach, e.g., collection of dead animals.
- 5.3 Shingle has historically only been graded during the high season and therefore the community access the beach without the benefit of graded shingle outside of the high season.
- 5.4 Natural grading and compaction of the shingle already occurs by pedestrians repeatedly walking up and down the shingle bank.
- 5.5 Shingle is not graded at any other locations along the 9 miles of coastline that the Council is responsible for except Shore Road, East Wittering. Here shingle grading is undertaken by East Wittering and Bracklesham Parish Council, as well as on one area of private land at Cakeham Manor.

5.6 Option 2 – Grade the slipway at Bracklesham Bay 3 times per year

- 5.7 For the council to employ a contractor to carry out periodic grading, as a discretionary service. If Cabinet is minded to provide this service, it could be trialed for 1 year from part of the proceeds of the sale of foreshore boats. Although there would be no means to monitor pedestrian usage, the longevity of the grading could be monitored to inform a future report to Cabinet to seek approval for an ongoing budget for this work if it is deemed effective.
- 5.8 Under this option a contractor would be commissioned to grade the slipway at suitable times in the high season (between Easter and the end of August) to provide improved access for beach users. Issues around this option include:
- a. Experience informs us that shingle grading lasts a very short time. Within 2-3 days any benefits provided by grading are lost and a shelf is formed by the waves at high tide. Any stormy weather will remove the grading.
 - b. That the Council will only be grading at Bracklesham.
 - c. Grading may raise expectations from the public that the Council will carry out grading on an on-going basis at Bracklesham and in other areas along the coastline where no grading occurs.
 - d. Whilst grading would assist with improving access, it would not assist with disabled access.

6 Alternatives Considered

6.1 See above.

7 Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 Under Option 2, the cost of grading the shingle 3 times per year would be £1,740 (£580/grading). This would require the engagement of a contractor which will involve the foreshore officer's time organising the Council's usual contract arrangements in relation to procurement, finance and health and safety and monitoring the work.
- 7.2 There are no legal implications to adopting option 1 as the Council does not have a legal duty to provide graded shingle or disabled access along the coastline. The activity is discretionary only.

8 Consultation

8.1 Informal consultation has occurred with the parish councils on the Manhood Peninsula.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 Some members of the community will be impacted if they have previously relied on the graded shingle to assist their access to the beach during the high season. However, the grading does not provide disabled access or access for pushchairs etc.
- 9.2 There are no corporate risks associated with either grading or not grading the shingle.
- 9.3 Grading the shingle may raise expectations for grading elsewhere on the coast or increased frequency of grading.
- 9.4 The future use of the vacated Foreshore building may impact the existing access for the contractor. Alternative access could be achieved through the fixed barrier at the end of the service road adjacent to the Foreshore building, however there are licensing and construction costs to this option.

10 Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following?		
	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		x
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation		x
Human Rights and Equality Impact Some members of the community will be impacted if they have previously relied on the graded shingle to assist their access to the beach during the high season. It does not provide disabled access or access for pushchairs etc.	x	

Safeguarding and Early Help		x
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		x
Health and Wellbeing		X
Other (please specify)		x

11 Appendices

None

12 Background Papers

None