

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee

## Agenda Item 37

**Subject:** New Beach Chalets

**Date of meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022

**Report of:** Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

### For general release

Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The Brighton Beach Feasibility Study on the provision of additional beach huts and chalets was presented to the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee in June 2021 (See Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The Committee noted the report and requested that a further report be brought to a future meeting to consider the project plans prior to implementation. The three potential sites recommended in the Feasibility Study were:
  - Madeira Drive - on the beach opposite Dukes Mound
  - Rottingdean Undercliff – adjacent to existing beach chalet (east) block
  - Saltdean Undercliff - either side of the Saltdean tunnel/subway
- 1.3 This report identifies Saltdean as the preferred location and provides a costed project proposal to provide additional beach chalets to be let by the council to local residents based on the feasibility study and available approved budget.
- 1.4 At Budget Council in February 2021, a capital allocation of £0.250m was approved for seafront railings replacement or beach chalet/hut Infrastructure and replacement.

1.5 There is a further £100k allocated specifically to Seafront Railings. This amount will cover the cost of new paint trials which is in the process of being arranged.

1.6 Beach chalets are in high demand and can only be rented by residents of Brighton & Hove. The waiting lists for beach chalets are currently closed due to the high numbers on each list. The provision of more beach chalets will potentially provide additional long-term revenue income for the council.

## **2 Recommendations**

2.1 That Committee approve the proposed beach hut design and costs to build 14 new beach chalets at Saltdean.

2.2 That Committee agree the funding of £243,610.60 of capital funding (which has already been approved at the Council Budget in February 2021) to build 14 Beach Chalets at Saltdean.

## **3 Context and background information**

3.1 Enjoyment of the seaside is a key recreational resource for thousands of the city's residents as well as the vast numbers of visitors. A beach chalet gives a chance for users to enjoy their own unique space with fantastic views and amenities that enable their seaside trips to be more frequent and longer. Consequently, there are long, currently closed waiting lists for the 105 chalets available.

3.2 This report follows on from the public online survey conducted in September 2020 regarding chalet lettings and the Brighton Beach Hut Feasibility Study, conducted in early 2021 which identified potential locations for both new beach chalets and the traditional wooden beach huts.

3.3 The Brighton Beach Hut Feasibility Study (Appendix 1 – page 42) recommended (abridged):

- Madeira Drive and Saltdean offer the best opportunities in terms of the flexibility to develop both locations.
- Taking an ambitious approach to the design of beach chalets, to progressively expand the scope of what a beach chalet can be.

### Beach Chalets Demand and Availability

3.4 There are more people on the waiting list than there are chalets available to rent. The waiting list was closed in 2017 and re-opened in September 2022. Currently there are 207 residents on the waiting lists across all locations, but some residents are on several waiting lists, so there is a degree of duplication.

3.5 The numbers of rented Beach Chalets in Brighton and Hove is currently 105 across Hove, Rottingdean, Madeira Drive, Ovingdean and Saltdean. See Appendix 2, for more detail on current locations and their waiting lists.

3.6 Since 2011, 51 of the 105 chalets have been re-let to new tenants which shows a turnover rate of just under 50% over 11 years. Over the next 8 years,

122 chalets will be returned. This is a turnover rate of 116% over 8 years. Please see Appendix 2, for the detailed turnover by year and location.

- 3.7 The increase in turnover, reflects changes in the letting policy made in 2011, which introduced a maximum 5 year fixed term lease for new tenancies and that chalets be let only to Brighton & Hove residents. In 2022, existing tenants with no fixed term were moved to new maximum 8-year fixed term lease.

#### 4 Analysis and consideration of alternative options

##### Beach Chalet Locations

- 4.1 The three sites identified in the Feasibility Study, recommended as suitable for new beach chalets, are shown below. Saltdean has been considered as two sites, as each site is physically separate (either side of the Saltdean Tunnel).

Table 1 – Potential Locations for Beach Chalets

Site	Location	Potential No. of New Beach Chalets
Saltdean West	West Side of the Saltdean tunnel – (Site 11 p23 Appendix 1)	Up to 15
Saltdean East	East Side of the Saltdean tunnel – (Site 11 p23 Appendix 1)	Up to 15
Madeira Drive	Madeira Drive - (Site 5 p23 Appendix 1) – on the beach opposite Dukes Mound	Up to 12
Rottingdean	(Site 6 p23 Appendix 1) adjacent to existing beach chalet (east) block	Up to 23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Up to 65</b>

- 4.2 The Madeira Drive site has the benefit of an easily accessible and desirable location, right on the beach, with space for a patio area. However, extensive work will be required to provide a hardstanding which needs to be built around the new boardwalk. Access to water and electricity is more difficult as these services are further away from the site. Therefore, costs will be higher and likely to exceed the current approved funds.
- 4.3 At Rottingdean, the Feasibility Study suggested that an additional 23 beach chalets could be built, however, a further review of this site shows that it is a less viable location, for the reasons below:
- Lesser surveilled site making it more prone to vandalism
  - More difficult to service with power and water.
  - Not suitable to accommodate hut style chalets due to chalk falls.
  - Limited in terms of unit depth leaving only 5m clearance at front
- 4.4 The Saltdean location offers the most viable option in terms of cost and ease of installation. New chalets can be sited directly onto the promenade requiring

minimal infrastructure work. Both water and electricity services are nearby, and it has good level access. (See Appendix 4 – for photos of the location)

- 4.5 Therefore, Saltdean West was chosen to seek a costed project plan, based within the budget of £250,000, which was approved at Budget Council in February 2021 (See sections 1.4 and Section 7.1).
- 4.6 An ITQ/Tender was issued to Council approved building contractors in September 2022. Following a competitive tender, the cost provided by the preferred contractor, to build 14 beach chalets at Saltdean West, was quoted as £243,610.60. If approved, a contract will be issued under Council's Contract Standing Orders.
- 4.7 The preferred contractor can be appointed in early November, if approved by Committee.

#### Beach Chalet Design and Materials

- 4.8 The Feasibility Study proposed an ambitious approach to the design of beach chalets and this has been incorporated into the plans :
  - The chalets are made of composite material, completely weatherproof and fireproof (to Class A rating) and are prefabricated off site, delivered and installed directly on the ground.
  - Double style chalets have been proposed, with a dual pitched roof
  - They will have French doors (without glazed panels) and open outward.
  - Each chalet will be connected to electricity and a drinking water standpipe.
  - See Appendix 3 for more details of the materials and design, with images.

### **5 Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 An online survey was conducted in September 2020 to engage with resident's interest in future beach chalets or beach huts. Around 800 residents responded with an overwhelming interest in more chalets or huts.
- 5.2 In January 2021 the Committee "agreed for a further report to identify locations for the provision of additional beach chalets and beach huts along

the seafront including less well visited parts to help regenerate those areas, in particular the area east of the Palace Pier.”

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 Installing new beach chalets provides residents with affordable access to local beachside facilities whilst the Council benefits from the additional long-term income with low ongoing maintenance costs.
- 6.2 If approval is given, the Saltdean West chalets project can begin in mid November, initially to seek Planning permission.
- 6.3 Madeira Drive and Saltdean East also provide viable sites for additional beach chalets for residents use, should further funds become available.

## **7 Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. At Budget Council in February 2021, a capital allocation of £0.250m was approved for seafront railings replacement or beach chalet/hut Infrastructure and replacement. A separate £0.100m allocation was also made specifically for Seafront Railings. The costs of the new chalets of £0.244m as outlined in the report will be funded from the capital allocation. Any residual capital investment required would be funded through borrowing where additional rental income would cover the financing costs. For additional Beach Chalets above these 14 units, further funding would need to be identified. Any significant variation to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack    Date consulted : 20/10/22

## **8 Legal implications**

- 8.1 The contract to build the beach chalets will need to be tendered in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

Name of lawyer consulted: Joanne Dunyaglo    Date consulted :18/10/22

## **9 Equalities implications**

- 9.1 All chalets will be designed to be wheelchair accessible and available to rent to local residents via current waiting lists. As Beach Chalets are rented to residents, they are more accessible and affordable than buying a beach hut.

## **10 Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 The style of beach chalet chosen for the new Beach Chalets, reflects the Radical Design, outlined in the Feasibility Study, to ensure they meet the key requirements :

### **Key Client Requirements –**

- Resilience,
- Easy to Maintain,
- Environmentally Sustainable

**Key Performance Requirements –**

- Resilient to the Impacts of the Marine Environment,
- Resilient Design and Construction to withstand Vandalism,
- Low Maintenance

**11 Supporting Documentation**

11.1 Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Brighton Beach Hut Feasibility Study by Mott McDonald
- Appendix 2 - Beach Chalet Demand and Waiting Lists
- Appendix 3 - Beach Chalets Design & Materials
- Appendix 4 - Saltdean Location