

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Wednesday 23rd February 2011

at 4.30 pm

**in Committee Room B,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Councillors Barclay, Cook, Fleet, Flintoff, Gibbon, Griffin, McKenna, Richardson and Thomas.

Resident Representatives: John Cambridge, Brenda Loynes and Iris Ryder.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2011

4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM

No items.

5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

No items.

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS/BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

No items.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Investigation into 'Foreshore Management':-

7.1 The co-ordination of foreshore management services:-

- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
- (b) Verbal evidence from the Environment Agency - *Principal Water Quality Planner and the Senior Environment Officer*
- (c) Verbal evidence from Northumbrian Water – *A representative from Northumbrian Water*

7.2 The balance between conservation and tourism in relation to how the foreshore is managed including current and future budget pressures:-

- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
- (b) Presentation – *Officers from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department*
- (c) Foreshore Management Services – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*

8 ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 23rd March 2011, commencing at 4.30 p.m. in Committee Room B**

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

19 January 2011

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Stephen Thomas (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Mary Fleet, Bob Flintoff, Sheila Griffin and
Carl Richardson

Resident Representatives:

John Cambridge, Brenda Loynes and Iris Ryder

Officers:

Graham Frankland, Assistant Director (Resources)
Alison Mawson, Assistant Director (Community Safety and
Protection)
Denise Ogden, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)
Mike Blair, Highways, Traffic and Transportation Manager
Chris Wenlock, Parks and Countryside Manager
David Hunt, Strategy and Performance Officer
Debbie Kershaw, Quality and Safety Officer
Laura Stones, Scrutiny Support Officer
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

Also present:

Gordon Johnson, Stella Johnson and John Lynch

45. Apologies for Absence

None

46. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

47. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2010

Confirmed.

48. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum

No items.

49. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

50. Proposals for inclusion in Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan 2011/12 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Service Planning for the last 3 years had been based on a common set of outcomes shared by the Council in the Departmental and Corporate Plans and the Hartlepool Partnership in its Local Area Agreement (LAA). However confirmation had recently been given from central government that there would be no requirement to prepare a new LAA when the current one ends in March 2011. This provided an opportunity to review the outcome framework and deliver a more targeted, slimmed down version. Proposals for a new outcome framework had previously been reported to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and Cabinet. The Forum's comments on the detailed proposals for inclusion in the 2011/12 Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan would be fed back to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 25 February 2011 to enable a response to be formulated and presented to Cabinet in April 2011.

The Assistant Director (Resources) gave a presentation on the proposed outcomes and actions to the forum. He highlighted the risks facing the Council that could make it difficult to make progress or achieve individual targets. These included the economy, local government finance, changing government policy and partnership arrangements. Details were then given of achievements, challenges, areas to target and proposals in relation to the relevant divisions of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods. The Assistant Director clarified however that given the financial situation and future changes in terms of decentralisation and localism the plan and its targets were very much a work in progress with a number of caveats attached to it.

The following issues were then raised by members:

Completion of remediation scheme at Seaton Carew – the definition of this as an achievement was questioned, given the time it had taken and the problems which had been identified during the work. The Assistant Director acknowledged there had been problems but felt the achievement came from the work having been completed, given funding and implementation difficulties.

Drainage in Powlett Road – this problem had been ongoing for 3 years. Dates for repair were regularly sent to Councillors and then disregarded. The Assistant Director indicated that the scheme was approaching completion. When a confirmed date was available he would inform the ward councillors

Funding secured for coastal protection at Seaton Carew – why was similar work not being undertaken at the Headland? The Assistant Director acknowledged that there were problems to address and that the Headland was the subject of a feasibility study through separate funding. In addition we needed to work with the Port Authority in terms of financial and operational responsibility / priority. In terms of the necessary work officers had been asked to prepare a briefing session for the Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder and stakeholders giving an overview of the current situation. Members asked to be kept up to date with progress.

Recycling - members were pleased to note the increased numbers of people recycling in Hartlepool and the excellent work carried out by the neighbourhood services team. Rumours of a reduction in the number of collections were dismissed as being without foundation.

Potholes – ongoing problems with potholes had been exacerbated by the recent bad weather. An extensive scrutiny investigation had been carried out on this topic so members were fully aware of what was needed but did not have the funding to do it. Members noted the legal requirement to fill in potholes of a certain depth and queried whether legal action could be taken against the government for removing the necessary funding to carry out these legal obligations. The Assistant Director (Resources) would look into government funding. Questions were also raised around the subject of resurfacing of minor roads and reducing the number of accidental injury claims caused by uneven paving stones. The Highways, Traffic and Transportation Manager advised that during 2010/11 over a million pounds was spent on resurfacing including a lot of minor roads. He hoped for a similar amount in 2011/12. In terms of legal action the Council had only lost 1 court case in the last 2 years. Insurance funding was in place to protect against any claims and agreement tended to be reached between parties before cases came to court.

Composting – At the moment this function was being carried out by a third party at a nearby farm. However investigations into building a Council composting plant which could be utilised by neighbouring authorities were ongoing.

The Chair thanked officers for their input into the report and proposals. There were a number of issues facing the department in the future in light of the current economic / financial climate however they had met challenges in the past and he was confident that they would continue to do so.

Recommended

- I. That the proposed outcome templates be included in the 2011/12

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan

- II. That the comments made by the Forum be presented to Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 25 February 2011

51. Draft Final Report into 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures (*Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum*)

The Chair presented the draft findings of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures'. The Chair took the opportunity to thank the officers and all involved in the investigation. The Highways, Traffic and Transportation Manager highlighted the recommendation that a full public consultation be carried out prior to implementation, commenting that he hoped this would be positive across the town thereby reducing the need for individual consultations on schemes. £150,000 had been identified to fund implementation over the next 3 years, plus Local Transport Plan funding and an additional £70,000. Members expressed their support for the proposals but felt that if there were already sufficient funds to cover implementation then the additional £70,000 would be better spent elsewhere. The Highways, Traffic and Transportation Manager believed that this was achievable. Members also suggested that an additional recommendation be included whereby all new residential developments would include 20 mph limits which would require a review of the planning requirements. The Forum also discussed roads which had not yet been adopted by the Council and thought that it was important to work with developers to implement 20mph limits.

The Chair thanked members for their comments. He noted the level of support which had been shown for the proposals and asked that officers take action regards publicising the scheme as soon as possible following consideration by Cabinet

Recommended

That the draft final report on the forum's investigation into 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures be approved for submission to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee for consideration with the addition of an extra recommendation.

52. Inquorate meeting

Members noted that the meeting was inquorate.

53. Scrutiny Investigation into 'Foreshore Management' – Scoping Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a scoping report for the Forum's investigation into Foreshore Management which included the following issues for consideration by the Forum:

Overall aim of the scrutiny investigation/enquiry

To evaluate the provision of Foreshore Management services in Hartlepool

Proposed terms of reference for the investigation/enquiry

The following Terms of Reference for the investigation were proposed:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of the agreed overall 'aim' for the provision of Foreshore Management services along with the legislative and policy requirements;
- (b) To evaluate how foreshore management services are provided/coordinated in Hartlepool including partnership arrangements with other agencies/organisations;
- (c) To explore the balance between conservation and tourism in relation to how the foreshore is managed while continuing to stimulate economic growth;
- (d) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which foreshore management is provided in Hartlepool and
- (e) To explore how foreshore management could be provided in the future, giving due regard to
 - I. Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which the services are currently provided by the Council/partner organisations and
 - II. If/how the service could be provided at a reduced financial cost (within the resources available in the current economic climate)

Potential areas of enquiry / sources of evidence

- (a) Member of Parliament for Hartlepool
- (b) Elected Mayor
- (c) Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism
- (d) Director/officers of the Council's Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department
- (e) Northumbria Water
- (f) Environment Agency
- (g) Ward Councillors
- (h) Resident Representatives
- (i) Other Local Authorities as examples of good/alternative practice
- (j) Local residents
- (k) Representatives of minority communities of interest or heritage
- (l) DEFRA (2004) Managing Coastal Activities: A Guide for Local Authorities

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/countryside/coastal-guidance.pdf>

Proposed timetable of the scrutiny investigation

The proposed timetable for the review to be undertaken, although this may be subject to change at any stage:-

19 January 2011 - Formal meeting of the Forum to receive: -

- I. Scoping Report
- II. 'Setting the Scene' report from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department to include the overall aim of foreshore management services, the legislative and policy requirements and the current and future budget pressures
- III. Evidence from the Portfolio Holder (subject to availability)
- IV. Evidence from the MP for Hartlepool, Iain Wright

Site Visit (date to be confirmed)

23 February 2011 - Formal meeting of the Forum to receive evidence from: -

- I. Northumbria Water (to include their role and responsibilities in relation to foreshore management and partnership work with the Council in relation to foreshore management)
- II. Environment Agency (to include their role and responsibilities in relation to foreshore management and partnership work with the Council in relation to foreshore management)
- III. Officers from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department (to include the balance between conservation and tourism, how the foreshore can be used to benefit the economy and how foreshore management services could be provided in the future to improve effectiveness and efficiency)

23 March 2011 - Consideration of the final report by the Forum

15 April 2011 - Consideration of the final report by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Consideration of the final report by Cabinet (date to be confirmed)

Members discussed the legislative requirements relating to water quality and requested that this be reflected in the terms of reference for the investigation.

Recommended

That the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's remit of the Scrutiny investigation into Foreshore Management be agreed.

54. Foreshore Management – Setting the Scene Presentation *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Services gave a presentation to the Forum on the issue of foreshore management. She outlined the overall aim of foreshore management services and how they were currently provided in Hartlepool, the legislative and policy requirements and the current and future budget pressures including the possibility of providing services at a reduced financial cost. The Assistant Director highlighted that the investigation would not cover coastal protection or the regeneration needs of Seaton Carew as both topics had been investigated previously by Scrutiny. The investigation would however refer to the needs and opportunities of the foreshore which would be fed into future development planning and regeneration at Seaton Carew, the Marina and the Headland. As well as recreation activity and conservation consideration would also be given to the welfare of local residents, visitor attractions and the commercial and industrial sectors.

Hartlepool has 12 miles of coast and as a coastal authority has a duty to maintain this coastline with its beaches and foreshore. The foreshore provides great and diverse opportunities for tourism and recreation ranging from traditional pastimes such as paddling and beach games to modern activities such as kite surfing and key skiing. Many of these activities require some form of management to reduce potential conflict between users and the natural environment. Regular events are held along the foreshore by the Countryside Team and other partnership organisations, including annual events such as the fireworks display, May Day kite festival and Boxing Day dip. One off events included seal watches and walks, rockpooling and bird ID workshops.

The lifeguard service operates from May to September every year, providing 8 lifeguards (4 at Seaton and 4 at the Headland) and associated equipment. The lifeguards provide litter picking and paddling pool duties in addition to the more traditional lifeguarding role. Each year 10 primary schools take part in rookie lifeguard training, practising lifeguard skills and listening to a beach safety talk. Beach safety campaigns had previously been carried out and water safety talks were carried out as and when requested. The Seaton and Headland paddling pools were available to the public at the same time as the lifeguard service. The Seaton pool was emptied, cleaned and refilled daily, the Headland pool on a weekly basis. Problems with the base in the Headland pool could cause cracking requiring repairs during which time the pool would close for a couple of days.

Dog Control Orders were introduced in December 2008 as part of the 2005 Clean Neighbourhood Act. In the last year there had been 25 fixed penalty notices issued in relation to the exclusion of dogs from the foreshores with 76

notices issued in relation to dog fouling on the foreshores. The CROW Act 2000 obliges local authorities to conserve and enhance special interest features of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Council manages Seaton Common and Dunes and Hart Warren Dunes and is therefore legally obliged to consult with Natural England before deviating from the Site Management Statement. The Crimdon to Headland coastline and much of Seaton Carew and Teesmouth is classed as a RAMSAR site with many areas falling within the boundaries of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area. Coastal conservation and site maintenance activities fall under the management of the Parks and Countryside Wardens, helped by the Parks and Countryside volunteers. Areas covered include SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves such as Seaton Dunes and Common, Hart Warren Dunes and Spion Kop Cemetery. Staff and volunteers carry out regular site checks, litter pick and manage vegetation. These activities increase during the summer months. Amenity beaches are cleansed and maintained Monday to Friday by one Council employee using a tractor and various implements, Seaton beach being cleansed 4 days and focusing on the Headland beaches, fish and block sands the remaining day. The operative would also litter pick, remove larger objects (including town wide fly tipping) and clear sand and litter from the coach park areas. Last year 126 fixed penalty notices had been issued in relation to litter enforcement. Details were also given of public conveniences at the foreshores, including sites, opening times and service provision.

In May 2011 the Bathing Water Directive requires the display of public information about water quality. With this comes more stringent water quality standards including the replacement of the previous pass or fail annual assessment by a 4 yearly classification system covering 4 levels of assessment. Monitoring would be carried out by the Environment Agency and the results published on the internet. The 3 bathing waters requiring signage in Hartlepool are Seaton Carew North, Seaton Carew Central and Seaton Carew North Gare. Signage funding would be provided

Following the presentation the following issues were raised by members:

Had any baptisms been held along the coastline? The Quality and Safety Officer advised that there had been some on Seaton Carew beach. The participants tended to be from ethnic minorities.

Would it be possible to co-ordinate cleaning rotas with forthcoming public events? At carnival time the organisers had to clean the Fish Sands themselves. The Assistant Director acknowledged that this was an issue which could be improved upon. Beach cleaning was managed by the Street Cleansing Section however Members might be minded to recommend that beach cleaning be included as part of the foreshore remit of the Quality and Safety Officer thereby enabling greater focus and co-ordination.

Were the Fish Sands and North Sands patrolled by lifeguards? The Assistant Director confirmed that the Fish and Block Sands were patrolled, however the North Sands were not classed as an amenity beach and

therefore they were not. Proposed budget cuts of approximately £19,000 meant these resources will operate over a shorter time period than previous..

Would it be possible to put warning signage on the North Sands? The Council's legal obligations would need to be checked before such action was taken. By erecting such signage the Council could be seen to be taking responsibility for public safety and could be liable in the event of an incident.

Could local businesses be approached to finance foreshore activity? Local industry were already involved in the management of conservation through INCA however investigation into further involvement could be carried out via the Environment Partnership.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) for her presentation. He felt that it might be prudent for the Forum to give regard to legal issues around water quality standards.

Recommended

That the content of the presentation be noted.

55. Issues Identified from the Forward Plan

No items.

56. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

No items.

The meeting concluded at 6:15 pm

CHAIR

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

23 February 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: INVESTIGATION INTO FORESHORE
MANAGEMENT - THE CO-ORDINATION OF
FORESHORE MANAGEMENT SERVICES -
COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency have been invited to attend this meeting to discuss the co-ordination of foreshore management services including partnership arrangements with the Council and the legislative requirements relating to water quality.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 19 January 2011, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence for this Scrutiny investigation were approved by the Forum.
- 2.2 Consequently, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency have been invited to attend this meeting to discuss how foreshore management services are provided / co-ordinated in Hartlepool including partnership arrangements with the Council and the legislative requirements relating to water quality.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session it is suggested that responses should be sought to the following key questions:
- (i) What are the roles and responsibilities of Northumbrian Water / the Environment Agency in relation to foreshore management taking into account the legislative requirements relating to water quality; and
 - (ii) How does Northumbrian Water / the Environment Agency work in partnership with the Council in relation to foreshore management

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of the organisations in attendance in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3 of this report.

Contact Officer:- Laura Stones – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
Email: laura.stones@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in preparation of this report:-

- (a) Scrutiny Investigation into 'Foreshore Management' - Scoping Report
(Scrutiny Support Officer) – 19.01.11

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

23 February 2011

Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: INVESTIGATION INTO FORESHORE MANAGEMENT
- THE BALANCE BETWEEN CONSERVATION AND
TOURISM IN RELATION TO HOW THE FORESHORE
IS MANAGED INCLUDING CURRENT AND FUTURE
BUDGET PRESSURES - COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that Officers from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department have been invited to attend this meeting to discuss the balance between conservation and tourism in relation to how the foreshore is managed including current and future budget pressures.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 19 January 2011, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence for this Scrutiny investigation were approved by the Forum.
- 2.2 Consequently, Officers from the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department have been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence on the balance between conservation and tourism in relation to how the foreshore is managed while continuing to stimulate economic growth. Officers will also outline the current and future budget pressures.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session officers will outline:-
- (i) the balance between conservation and tourism in relation to how the foreshore is managed while continuing to stimulate economic growth;
 - (ii) how the foreshore can be used to benefit the economy;
 - (iii) how foreshore management services could be provided in the future giving due regard to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which the services are currently provided taking into account the legislative requirements relating to water quality; and

- (iv) the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which foreshore management services are provided in Hartlepool and if / how the service could be provided at a reduced financial cost

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of the officers in attendance in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3 of this report.

Contact Officer:- Laura Stones – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
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Tel: 01429 523 087
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in preparation of this report:-

- (a) Scrutiny Investigation into 'Foreshore Management' - Scoping Report
(Scrutiny Support Officer) – 19.01.11

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

February 23rd 2011



Report of: Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Subject: FORESHORE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

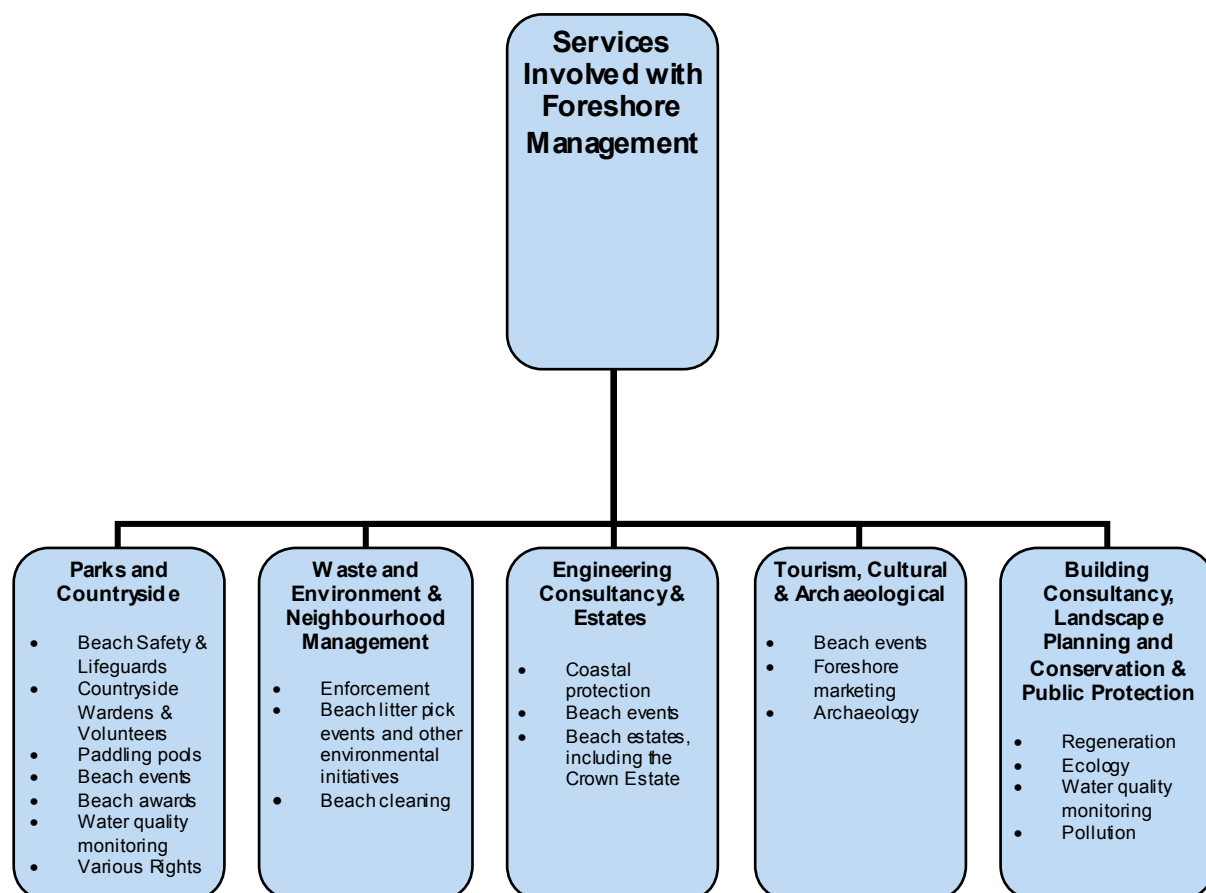
- 1.1 In relation to foreshore management services this report considers:
- (i) **Potential service delivery stances.** Some possible future service delivery stances for the various foreshore management services. Examining the potential for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which these services are currently provided with due regard to the legislative requirements relating to water quality; and
 - (ii) **Possible responses to budgetary pressures.** The possible impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which foreshore management services are provided in Hartlepool and if / how the service could be provided at a reduced financial cost
- 1.2 The report focuses upon the core day-to-day foreshore management services. It examines the background to the Beach Safety and Lifeguard service, Paddling pools, Various Rights, and Beach Cleaning. It also provides where relevant insight into possible future delivery stances, and looks to provide some basic cost/ benefit analysis of different budgetary responses.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview Foreshore Services

A variety of service offerings are either fully encompassed within the category foreshore services or partially contribute to the delivery of foreshore service outputs, figure 1 that follows illustrates this. The report focuses upon the core day-to-day frontline foreshore management services.

Figure 1. Illustration of service offerings that contribute to the delivery of foreshore service outputs.



2.2 Beach Safety and Lifeguards: Background

2.2.1 Back in 2000 the decision was taken that Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) would no longer provide a Beach Lifeguard service. In August 2003 a fatality at Seaton Carew prompted a review of the situation. The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) were commissioned to undertake a beach safety assessment which included researching the requirements for reinstating a modern beach lifeguard service. As a consequence of the findings of this report the decision was taken to reinstate a beach lifeguard service for the 2004 season.

2.2.2 The RLSS report made recommendations for the level of beach lifeguard service cover:

- Start the first May Bank Holiday weekend, initially weekends only, then operational every day for the whit and Summer school holidays, finishing when the schools go back in September (10am – 6pm).
- Level of cover at Seaton – three lifeguard and one lifeguard supervisor Monday – Friday and an additional lifeguard on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Level of cover at the Headland – two lifeguards at Fish Sands and two lifeguards at Block Sands, inclusive of one supervisor.

2.2.3 The Parks and Countryside section which provides the Beach lifeguard service were asked to examine the potential to reduce service cost as a result of 2011 budget pressures. A number of options were examined by Cabinet and decision was taken, in light of previous years experience of visitor demand, to start the lifeguards slightly later in the year. This decision allied with service efficiency savings reduced the budget for the lifeguard and ancillary services by £19K. As long as appropriate signage is present notifying that no lifeguard cover is operating at the previous times early in the year, the 2011 lifeguard season will be operating over a slightly reduced period:

- Starting at the Whit Holidays (everyday) covering Seaton only at weekends until the Summer Holiday where the Headland lifeguard season will start, finishing in September as normal.
- There will be four lifeguards at both sites, inclusive of one Supervisor. Previous years experience has indicated that 4 lifeguards at Seaton for weekends and Bank Holidays is adequate and this can be increased if circumstances potentially require i.e. the staging of events on the beach.
- Operational times remain the same 10am – 6pm

2.2.4 The Beach Safety budget is augmented through the Parks and Countryside Quality and Safety Officer providing first aid, pool lifeguarding and defibrillation training to other sections in addition to this officer providing the majority of the seasonal lifeguard training requirements and refresher courses.

2.3 Potential future Beach Safety and Lifeguards service delivery stances.

2.3.1 Option 1 - Outsourcing.

An enquiry was made in November 2010 to the RNLI for a general quote and overview of a RNLI beach lifeguard service provision in Hartlepool. For comparison purposes this was based upon the level of cover HBC lifeguard service provided for the 2010 lifeguard season.

2.3.2 It should be noted that at the time of the enquiry the RNLI indicated that they would not have the capacity to take on the provision of a beach lifeguard service during 2011.

2.3.3 Unfortunately RNLI are not able to provide a like-for-like service. The potential service offering would include:

- Recruitment, selection and training of new lifeguards each year
- Equipment provision
- Uniforms

The RNLI would require if available, access to suitable buildings to operate service from and would **not** provide the current services additionally undertaken by existing HBC Beach Safety and Lifeguard service:

- Paddling pools cover or cleaning and daily maintenance for pools at Seaton and Headland.
- Litter picking and other beach cleaning
- Enforcement duties (dog free beach areas, litter, antisocial behaviour)
- Daily town wide lifebuoy inspection programme
- Beach event assistance
- Lifeguarding of specialist events

2.3.4 An additional financial cost with outsourcing is the client contract management role which would need to fall to a Hartlepool Borough Council Officer to ensure the service is being delivered as requested.

2.3.5 Option 2 – HBC delivery and associated income augmentation through training programmes and event coverage.

The HBC lifeguard service has been developed with a proactive culture, doing foot patrols, liaising more with the public and giving out safety information with the onus being on early prevention and avoidance of an incident.

2.3.6 The Parks and Countryside section runs a very successful 'Rookie Lifeguard' schools education programme to raise the profile of beach safety with young children through real life beach activities.

2.3.7 Other beach safety schemes run by the lifeguard service include providing ID bracelets for families with young children on the beach so they can be quickly reunited with parents if lost.

2.3.8 The flexibility of the Lifeguard Service allows it to react to changing circumstances and this is a huge benefit to controlling frontline service costs. The use of zero-hour fixed term seasonal contracts means staff costs can be closely controlled. The flexibility of the lifeguards to contribute to associated daily maintenance routines such as paddling pool cleaning, water quality monitoring and dosing; beach cleaning and lifebelt inspections allows other Parks and Countryside staff to continue to concentrate on core responsibilities during the busy summer period and consequently the limited resources at the Parks and Countryside teams disposal are used in a very efficient and effective way.

2.3.9 There is potential to grow the income generating capabilities of this service arm through the provision of further watercraft and safety training courses to outside agencies and private individuals. The Personal Water Craft course is one such additional potential offering which could be delivered outside the Lifeguard season. This is in addition to pool lifeguard training and various first aid courses that are currently run to generate a limited income annually.

2.4 Options summary Beach Safety and Lifeguards:

BEACH SAFETY AND LIFEGUARD SERVICE		
Costs	HBC Lifeguard Service	RNLI Lifeguard Service
Staffing	Lifeguard pay/ NI	Lifeguard pay/NI
Training lifeguards and running service	Training and running lifeguards part of P&C Quality and Safety Officer responsibility	RNLI train and run lifeguards
Monitoring	No additional costs	HBC would need to assign Client Contract Management role to HBC staff member to oversee RNLI
Services Provided	HBC Lifeguard Service	RNLI Lifeguard Service
Lifeguard observations and emergency action	Yes	Yes
Lifeguard Supervision and safety advice	Yes	Yes at a reduced level
Dog advice	Yes	Yes at a reduced level
Litter picks and other beach cleaning	Yes	No
Paddling Pool duties	Yes	No
Assisting with beach events	Yes	No
Lifeguarding other open water events	Yes	No

2.5 Paddling Pools : Background

2.5.1 During 2007 in an effort to find efficiency savings it was decided that the Beach Safety and Playground Inspection teams, who were at the time within the Adults and Community Services Department, would take over the cleaning of the paddling pools at Seaton and the Headland at Block Sands, previously DSO completed this duty at the cost of approximately £3,500 per season.

2.5.2 Before this takeover the Seaton Paddling Pool was emptied, cleaned and refilled Monday, Wednesday and Friday however it was felt that this was insufficient due to water quality concerns. After the reassignment of duties the cleaning regime was increased to every day, except in adverse weather when the pool is left empty until the weather improves. The Parks and Countryside sections Playground Inspector and Beach Lifeguards, when on duty, alternate sharing this task usually it is undertaken before the beach gets busy and is normally complete before 11am. Last season the team had the benefit of two Future Job Fund employees who assisted with the cleaning of both pools.

2.5.3 The Block Sands Paddling Pool has a pool plant and was designed not to require emptying every day. It was initially thought that the pool water would stay in the pool for most of the season, relying on the pool chemical dosing and filtration system to ensure the water quality was suitable for use. It has become apparent that the pumping/ filtration system, although suitable for indoor swimming pools situations, has to cope with much more challenging condition in relation to the Headland paddling pool:

- Indoor swimming pools have restricted access and the number of users can be controlled, whereas the paddling pool is open to everyone and on busy days the dosing system is severely stretched to keep up with the number of users.
- Indoor swimming pools have a higher volume of water and can cope with higher bather loads, 30 litres per bather per day is the recommended dilution calculation for pools, on a busy day at the Headland paddling pool this would require the pool to be emptied.
- Indoor swimming pool management have control of the users who enter the facility, the Headland paddling pool is not supervised fulltime i.e. early mornings, evenings and night-time. Although there is a dog ban in the area it has been witnessed that people do still allow their dogs to go into the pool and on occasion it has been necessary to take emergency action when dog faeces has been deliberately put in the pool, similarly fishermen digging for bait on the beach have been caught washing their wellington boots in the pool.
- The environment where the paddling pool is situated can cause additional problems, such as a wave breaking over the top of the low sea wall and inundating the pool with sea water and sand. Sunlight also decreases the chemical content of the pool and requires careful monitoring of water quality.

2.5.4 Experience has shown that it is necessary during the season to empty, clean and refill this pool on a weekly basis to ensure water quality can be maintained by the pumping/ filtration system. Headland pool is larger than the Seaton pool and it can take up to a day to complete this task.

2.5.5 An additional problem exists with the seawall/ defences upon which the Headland pool sits. The seawall is of variable makeup and considerable unseen movement of seawall materials can take place. Unfortunately such movement can cause the pool surface to blister and crack, as a consequence the pool requires regular emptying for surface checks and repairs to make it watertight.

2.5.6 The Headland paddling pool base problems are believed to be a result of various materials used as a sub base to the sea wall. It is believed that movement of the sub base results from regular phenomena such as when the sea water floods the area at high tides that can reach the promenade wall. As a result of this movement cracks appear in the paddling pool surface, the

water also gets under the surfacing causing blistering which also break open. In the early years of this problem the contractor who originally applied the surfacing would be asked carryout the repairs, however this was very costly and the pool was closed for weeks whilst waiting for the contractors to complete the work. Understandably there was at times considerable public displeasure at the closure of the facility. In order to minimise closure periods for this type of repair the HBC's Facilities Management Section are now engaged to carry out these types of repairs, the surfacing used is not the original colour of the pool floor but the repairs can be done in one day, resulting in a faster turnaround.

2.6 Potential future Paddling Pool service delivery stances.

2.6.6 The paddling pools attract plenty of local interest and there is an established demand for this facility especially in the Summer months, there are however some options that could be considered if there was a need to reduce the paddling pools day-to-day operation costs:

- **Option 1 – Current Service.**
- **Option 2a - Shorter paddling pool season.** At the moment the Block Sands Paddling Pool opens at Easter, the beginning of the season sees very little use because the weather this time of year is generally still poor, therefore the opening could be put back to a later date. The Seaton Carew Paddling Pool opens in early May to coincide with the start of the previous lifeguard season, however because the lifeguard season is to start at Whit Week this year a concession could be made to open both padding pools at this time.
- **Option 2b - Reduce the number of times cleaning and refilling is completed at the paddling pools.** As previously mentioned the number of times was increased to improve the cleanliness of the facilities, however there is a problem with algae growth at both pools so going back to past methods is likely to produce an increase in algae growth especially after a hot summers day after major use.
- **Option 3 - Close the paddling pools.** The paddling pools annual maintenance costs the Local Authority approximately between 15 – 25k per year, the cost mainly comes from the Block Sands paddling pool for repairs to the paddling pool base and plant maintenance. These costs do not include ongoing daily maintenance costs for the cleaning and checking both paddling pools by the Parks and Countryside staff.

2.6 Options summary Paddling Pools :

PADDLING POOLS		
Current Service	Reduced Service	Service Removed
Block Sands – Currently opens at Easter Seaton – Currently opens the beginning of May	Both pools open at Whit – saving on chemicals, water, staffing and day to day maintenance costs.	Public and political concerns to resolve
Block Sands – Emptied, cleaned and refilled weekly Seaton – Emptied, cleaned and refilled daily (in 2010 no complaints were received regarding the cleanliness of both pools)	Cleaning reduction – Emptied, cleaned and refilled every two to four weeks depending on use – potential increase in complaints and increase risk to public health	Public and political concerns to resolve

2.7 Various Rights : Background

2.7.1 The Various Rights service offering consists of two plots next to the Seaton Carew Paddling Pool where providers of a bouncy castle and small children's rides can annually tender to occupy the sites for trading. They can tender for the Summer and Winter seasons and we have an annual income from the Various Rights programme of approximately £1,200 which goes into the Foreshore budget to support service delivery.

2.7.2 Historically the Various Rights included street trading but the Licensing Section took over this a few years ago and the Foreshore Section retained the children attractions. In the past the Various Rights programme had more sites for these attractions but as areas on the foreshore have been refurbished or landscaped the number of sites has diminished.

2.7.3 This year to increase income and offer more facilities we are looking to expand the Various Rights programme at the Seaton Paddling Pool from two sites to four sites. Tenders will be welcomed for the existing bouncy castle and small children's ride sites and two alternative attractions on two newly designated and adjacent sites, activities might include portable crazy golf or a face painter.

2.8 Potential future Various Rights service offering stances.

2.8.1 The Seaton redevelopment proposals include substantive investment into the linear seafront green space running northward toward the new Coronation Drive toilets. The Parks and Countryside team are looking to draw investment into this green space to build in a variety of natural play space opportunities for children and families. It is also hoped to invest in strong revitalised landscaping and planting schemes that further enhance the attraction of this

valuable coastal resource for residents and visitors alike. As part of this green space investment the scope potentially exists to incorporate a small number of well sited and sensitive various rights opportunities that enhance the recreational attraction of this area.

2.9 Options summary Various Rights:

VARIOUS RIGHTS	
Current Service	Increased Service
Two sites at Seaton Carew's Paddling Pool – Small children ride and bouncy castle	Increase to four sites at Seaton Carew paddling pool, and look to provide a small number of sensitive additional various rights at north Coronation Drive green space site as redevelopment proposals allow.
Current approximate income is between £1,000 - £1,200	Potentially the income from various rights could double at Seaton Paddling Pool in the short term.

2.10 Beach Cleaning

2.10.1 Currently beach cleaning sits within the Neighbourhood Management Section.

2.10.2 At Seaton Carew the beach tractor cleans the beach amenity area Monday, Wednesday and Friday and clears the shifting sand from the slipways and car parks, the clearing of sand is more essential in the winter because of the higher winds. Cleansing operatives regularly patrol the Seaton promenade with hand carts to ensure non-beach areas are kept litter free.

2.10.3 The smaller beaches of the Headland Fish Sands and Block Sands are subject to tidal conditions and tractor cleaning is not feasible. During the months of April to September there is a cleaning operative who completes these litter picking duties as well as cleaning the promenades and other adjacent areas. Also the Beach Lifeguards when operational and at quiet times will also litter pick the beaches and paddling pool.

2.10.4 During the summer season occasional complaints are received from members of the public regarding seaweed on the beach at Block Sands, however this beach is designated as a Special Protected Area and seaweed removal is not permitted.

2.11 Potential future Beach Cleansing service offering stances.

2.11.1 There is currently one operative qualified to drive the tractor within Neighbourhood Management team and on occasions when they have a

shortage of cleaning operatives in other town wide areas the beach cleaning operative is removed from beach cleansing duties to cover the shortfall.

2.11.2 A possible improvement in service cover might result from the transfer of responsibility for beach cleansing to the Parks and Countryside section who currently operate a small fleet of tractors for its grounds maintenance contracts and have a large number of trained operatives. The centralisation of these maintenance responsibilities within the Parks and Countryside team which also provides beach safety, lifeguards, paddling pools, various rights and has substantive coastal responsibility in the coastal countryside and nature conservation assets it manages on behalf of the authority, might also provide greater service responsiveness and flexibility.

2.12 Options summary Beach Cleansing:

BEACH CLEANING CONSIDERATIONS	
Current Service	Future Consideration
Beach Cleaning under Neighbourhood Management	Beach Cleaning under Parks and Countryside
Beach cleaning operations are completed Monday, Wednesday and Friday	Look to increase the number of days beach cleaning is completed
One operative who is regularly removed from their normal duties to cover staff shortages elsewhere, this occasionally results in complaints from the public regarding litter on the beach especially after a sunny day	Only remove operative to do other duties if absolutely necessary and in their absence the Parks and Countryside Section have other operatives trained to use the beach tractor potentially resulting in a reduction in complaints.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Forum consider the report and seek clarification on any relevant issues.

4. CONTACT OFFICER

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