



SIMULTANEOUS WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET AND SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 28 July 2014

SOUTHWOLD HARBOUR LANDS – REVIEW OF CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (REP1127)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A joint working group of Waveney District Council’s Cabinet and Southwold Town Council conducted a detailed consultation, between 2 June and 11 July 2014, with regard to their draft vision for the future of the Southwold Harbour Lands (Appendix A).
Following that consultation the joint working group have reviewed the recommendations that they had been minded to make to Waveney District Council’s Cabinet and Southwold Town Council.
- 2.
3. Waveney District Council’s Cabinet and Southwold Town Council are now asked to simultaneously consider the consultation document (Appendix A) and the full consultation responses to determine the most appropriate next steps.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	Southwold
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Members:	Joint Southwold Harbour Lands Working Group
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Supporting Officers:	Arthur Charvonia, Strategic Director Lesley Beevor, Town Clerk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Waveney District Council and Southwold Town Council formed a joint working group during 2013 in order to consider the future of the Southwold Harbour Lands.
- 1.2 Through the efforts of the joint working group some immediate improvements have been delivered on the Harbour Lands. The primary focus of the joint working group, however, has been to develop a sustainable long term approach for the Harbour Lands, that addresses the issues of local involvement and engagement, ownership, responsibility, liability and delivery.
- 1.3 With this in mind in May 2014 the joint working group developed a consultation document designed to capture their current thinking at that point in time. This consultation document is attached at Appendix A, and contains within it the terms of reference for the joint working group and a map of the Harbour Lands.
- 1.4 The consultation document set out a draft vision for the Harbour Lands underpinned by some core principles. The draft vision is structured in four parts - Harbour Area, Coast & Estuary, Caravan Site and Governance.
- 1.5 In particular the consultation document set out five recommendations that, subject to the responses received during the consultation, the working group were minded to recommend to the Cabinet of Waveney District Council and to Southwold Town Council.

2 CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The consultation took place between 2 June and 11 July 2014. The consultation was widely advertised through various press releases and newspaper articles. Hardcopies of the consultation document were made available in Southwold and online via both Councils' websites. In addition an opportunity was provided for anyone wishing to book an appointment to come and present their views in person to members of the joint working group. These sessions took place on Friday 11 July 2014 and a total of 12 people took up this opportunity.
- 2.2 In total over 100 written consultation responses have been submitted. The majority of these responses came from users of the Caravan Site. Due to the number of consultation responses received they have not been appended to this report. They are however listed as Background Documents and have been made available to all of the Members of the Waveney District Council and Southwold Town Council to consider prior to the simultaneous meeting on 28 July 2014. They are also available for any member of the public to review from either Southwold Town Hall or Waveney District Council Town Hall.
- 2.3 It is of course difficult to summarise all the different views expressed during a consultation. Set out below however are the broad majority views expressed through the responses. In some cases the points outlined below may contradict each other where there are clear differences of opinion. They have been summarised using the following headings:
- 2.4 **Caravan Site**
 - Phased investment is needed in health & safety, drainage, toilet & shower facilities, heating, electricity, water & sewerage, wifi, layout and landscaping but the site must not be overdeveloped (e.g. clubhouse or shop) as this would further damage the character of Southwold as a 'quintessential seaside town'.
 - Any investment should be done in an environmentally and ecologically sound way to make the site a beacon for such an approach.
 - It is somewhere currently that families can afford to use, whilst other holiday accommodation in the town is very expensive, so it should not be moved too far upmarket.
 - Caravan owners should have security of tenure and be able to pass their caravans on to their children. The management of waiting lists should also be more transparent.

- External (private) involvement in the caravan site via a lease type arrangement may produce investment but in turn limit the ability to protect the ‘Southwold Character’ of the site and the amount of money available to re-invest.

2.5 **Harbour**

- The Harbour should be added as a preservation area (AONB), with particular emphasis on the importance of the environment and wildlife.
- It should be retained as a working harbour and as a living place rather than just as somewhere for visitors.
- Non-business related vehicles should be restricted and / or parking should be pay and display rather than restricted.
- Flooding should be an additional consideration of the joint working group.
- Litter should be an additional consideration.
- The footpath closed since the December floods should be re-opened.

2.6 **Governance**

- A more commercial (less council) structure of management is required, and a Board of suitable and experienced individuals put in place that are not subject to electoral changes.
- Legal ownership should be resolved first.
- The Harbour Lands should be owned by Southwold (not just either Council).
- Ownership should be with the elected representatives of Southwold.
- Ownership and management of the Harbour Lands should be moved into a charitable trust.
- There should be local management and decision making.
- Southwold Caravan Owners Association (‘SCOA’) should be represented on any Board.
- There should be compliance with the Southwold Harbour Act 1933.

2.7 **Resources**

- Money generated by the Harbour Lands should stay in Southwold.
- Monies raised in the past have been used by Waveney District Council rather than being invested in the Southwold Harbour Lands.
- Clear and transparent separate accounts should be put in place.

3 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is anticipated that delivery of the recommendations set out within this report can be achieved from existing Council budgets. It is expected that there will be a financial cost generated as a result of recommendations 7 and 8.
- 3.2 Concerns have been raised through the consultation with regard to legal compliance, in particular with the Southwold Harbour Order 1933. It is therefore critical that independent advice is available as proposed within recommendation 7.
- 3.3 If recommendations 2 to 4 are approved then it is proposed that each Council appoints four councillors to the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee will then adopt the legal procedures required by executive committees of Waveney District Council for the arrangement of meetings and decision making. It is proposed that the quorum of the Joint Committee will be a minimum of three councillors, and that the Committee will only be quorate when at least one of the councillors appointed from each of the Councils is present.

4 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Following an extensive consultation process it is clear that there is general support for the direction of travel outlined in the original consultation document. However in providing their views, several consultees have expressed clear reservations about what must not happen in the future. Many, if not all, of these views are consistent with the ambitions expressed by the joint working group in the draft vision and principles. It is therefore considered that the appropriate next step is to establish a Joint Committee and to explore the opportunities and options outlined in recommendations 6 and 7. Critical to all of these actions will be ensuring that the Community Engagement Strategy, proposed in recommendation 8, is at the forefront of the process; and that ongoing engagement and involvement with stakeholders forms part of every aspect of the Joint Committee's investigations and decision making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the draft key principles and vision outlined in the consultation document (Appendix A) be adopted;
2. That a Joint Committee of Waveney District Council Cabinet and Southwold Town Council be established in place of the current joint working group; and that the Joint Committee adopts the terms of reference of the original joint working group.
3. That delegated authority be granted to the Joint Committee to act as the 'Initial Strategic Board' for the Southwold Harbour Lands as set out in the consultation document (Appendix A);
4. That Waveney District Council Cabinet and Southwold Town Council each appoint four of their Councillors to the Joint Committee, and each appoint two additional named substitutes;
5. That the governance arrangements set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report be adopted for the operation of the Joint Committee.
6. That investigations be made to identify the options for optimising investment in and delivery of the Caravan site in line with the vision set out in the consultation document (Appendix A);
7. That professional advisers be instructed on behalf of both Councils to develop the optimum options for the sustainable, long term, ownership, control and delivery of the Southwold Harbour Lands;
8. That a Community Engagement Strategy be developed and implemented to ensure the ongoing involvement of all relevant stakeholders as the vision continues to evolve and be delivered.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Southwold Harbour Lands Consultation
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Date	Type	Available From
11.07.14	Consultation responses	Waveney District Council and Southwold Town Council