

Report to Executive – 6 March 2008**Kingswear Passenger Ferry Pontoon Replacement****Report of Head of Property Services**

Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1972

Financial Implications: If the recommendation set out in this report is supported, it will require the allocation of £275,000 from the Council's capital resources. However, the new facility will result in a reduced level of annual maintenance costs, which will otherwise continue to rise considerably if the proposed works are not undertaken.

Purpose

This report sets out the requirements for the replacement of the Kingswear passenger ferry pontoon and bridge. Whilst it has significant financial implications for the Council, there are significant levels of risk if the structures are not replaced.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Executive RECOMMENDS to Council that:-

- a. The Kingswear Passenger Ferry pontoon and link bridge are replaced as set out in this report and that £275,000 is allocated from the Council's capital resources for that purpose; and**
- b. That standing orders are waived in respect of tendering the ancillary works required in order that these can be undertaken by the pontoon and bridge manufacturer (subject to overall costs coming within the total budget of £275,000).**

Background

1. The Kingswear Passenger Ferry Pontoon has been in operation for many years and is primarily used for the collection and landing of passengers who are travelling between Dartmouth and Kingswear. The passenger ferry rights are owned by South Hams Council and have currently been licensed to Dart Valley Railway (DVR) by the Council. These include the use of the landing pontoons at Kingswear and Dartmouth. However, DVR also has the rights to use the Kingswear bridge and pontoon in perpetuity in connection with its own business.
2. The Council has full responsibility for the repair, maintenance and replacement of the bridge and pontoon. This requirement was conferred on the Council when it took ownership of these assets together with the funds below them some years ago. DVR have no requirements to make any financial contribution to costs associated with the Council carrying out these obligations.

Current Condition of Pontoon and Bridge

3. There has been evidence of deterioration of these structures for some time, despite the Council undertaking periodic maintenance. The bridge comprises a steel structure with timber decking. The steelwork is severely corroded and has considerable rot in many areas of the timber decking. Areas of timber are currently being replaced in order to ensure that, very much in the short term, the bridge can continue to be used. However, this will not address the urgent need to replace the structure if it is to be safe in use beyond the 2008 season. Additionally, the electrical installation for the lighting (including navigational lights on the pontoon) has become very unreliable and requires ongoing attention. On several occasions in the last 18 months the lighting has failed and it has caused considerable concern to the Harbour Authority because of the danger to navigation. The original structure was installed in 1986 with a design life of 25 years (to 2011) in normal use. The current daily use is far greater than had been anticipated at that time hence the more rapid deterioration and shorter life.
4. The pontoon itself is in several sections and is held in place on steel piles, rising up and down these on the tide. The floats themselves are polystyrene encased in concrete, under a timber decking. The piles have evidence of corrosion whilst the floats demonstrate evidence of significant water absorption affecting the buoyancy. The part of the pontoon at the Southern end of the structure is signs of listing, and this can be seen quite clearly when viewing from Dartmouth. This is likely to continue worsening at an increasing rate.
5. External consultants have inspected the structures and have confirmed the above assessment of condition. They have clearly recommended that both elements are in urgent need of replacement in order to avoid significant risks to the health and safety of users and the potential interruption of the passenger ferry and DVR's general operation. The new structures have a design life of 25 years, although this can be significantly shortened by extreme weather or poor ferry docking procedures.

Proposals

6. The review undertaken by the consultants has considered the following options:

Option	Comments
1. Do nothing other than ongoing general maintenance works	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The structures are in such poor condition that failure is inevitable, in all likelihood within the short term.• Health and safety risks (potentially including death or serious injury) together with likelihood of business interruption• If major failure occurs, this could lead to significantly higher costs than options 2 or 3 as urgent replacement will not facilitate best value.• Major failure could lead to significant down time for the ferry or DVR's operation.

<p>2. Undertake significant refurbishment to the existing structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to accurately estimate costs until works are commenced. • Would only extend the life of the assets by 10 years. • Long period of disruption to ferry and DVR operation as will not be able to continue in use during refurbishment works – likely to be 6 to 8 weeks • Extent of works cannot be easily identified until structure is dismantled which may lead to much higher costs which are difficult to control. • The structure may prove to be beyond repair when works start thus leading to full replacement - this could leave the facility out of operation for 6 months
<p>3. Replacement of existing bridge and pontoon with new</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest initial cost estimates • Cost estimates are likely to be most realistic and ultimately provide best value for money given the risks associated with option 2. • Impact on ferry and DVR business minimised and likely to be affected for approximately 1 week. • New structures should require less ongoing maintenance and therefore deliver lowest revenue costs after installation.

7. The costs for the above 3 options have been obtained as follows. It should be remembered that whilst competitive prices have been obtained for the supply of the bridge and pontoons, the associated works in relation to removal of the existing, installation of new, dredging, pile repair etc are only estimates:

Option 1	Ongoing R&M costs only
Option 2	£145,000
Option 3	£275,000

8. Having reviewed the options set out above, officers advise that a full replacement of the bridge and pontoon, together with associated works, is the most appropriate way forward. Repair costs are initially lower, but this will provide a shorter life and carries high risks of rising costs, potential significant impact on business operations and uncertainty as to whether repair is actually achievable.

9. The lowest tendered figure for the supply of the bridge and pontoon is £210,000 including fees. In addition to this, estimates for pile repairs, dredging, removal of the old structures and installation of the new are estimated at £65,000. There is a risk that the costs associated with these works may not fall in line with the estimates, particularly as they will be undertaken by a range of contractors. This is of concern, and the contractors supplying the structures have stated that they would be prepared to provide a price for incorporating all of these works if they get an order for the pontoon and bridge. It is therefore recommended that standing orders are waived in order for this proposal to be accommodated subject to the costs coming within budget and being reviewed by external consultants.

Value for Money

10. The recommended option is for the replacement of all elements with new in the autumn of 2008. Whilst on the face of it this seems to be the most expensive proposal, it provides greater certainty, minimises impact on the service and reduces ongoing maintenance costs.

Strategic Risk Assessment

	Risk	Action to Mitigate
1	Short term failure of the structures during the 2008 season leading to health and safety risks and serious business interruption.	Undertake short terms repairs pending major works later in the year. Unfortunately it is not possible to programme replacement before this autumn, so some short term repairs will be required
2	Costs of works higher than estimated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain firm prices before committing to scheme • Pursuing option 3 reduces this risk
3	Adverse impact on Human Rights	There are not believed to be any Human Rights issues arising from this report.

Conclusion

11. This report sets out the recommended approach to the replacement of the bridge and pontoon at Kingswear used in connection with the passenger ferry and DVR's business operation. The Council is responsible for its maintenance and replacement.
12. Given the condition of the structure it now needs to be replaced/refurbished urgently and the recommendation is that replacement is carried out in the autumn of 2008.