

Salcombe Harbour Board – 2 June 2008**REPLACEMENT OF HARBOUR PONTOONS****Report of Head of Service Salcombe Harbour****Statutory Powers: Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954**

Financial Implications: Detailed in Exempt Annexes.

Purpose

To report on progress with the replacement of the Visitors' Pontoon during financial year 2008/09 and to seek the approval of the Harbour Board to replace the Batson Pontoons during financial year 2009/10.

This report supports South Hams objectives of good jobs (CP2), retention of the district's character (CP3) and value for money (CP6).

Recommendations**That the Harbour Board RESOLVES TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:**

- (i) that the contract for the replacement of the Visitors' Pontoon during winter 2008/09 be awarded to Walcon;**
- (ii) that the replacement of the Batson Pontoons be advanced to financial year 2009/10;**
- (iii) that the Harbour Master, in consultation with the Chairman of Salcombe Harbour and Lead Executive Member for the Harbour, invite tenders for the replacement of the Batson Pontoons during winter 2009/10.**

Background – Visitors' Pontoon

1. The Harbour Board recommended the commencement of the tender process for the replacement of the Visitors' Pontoon (SH60/07). The Invitation to Tender closed on 28 March 2008 and the two tender documents received were opened. Details of the tenders are at Annex A.

Visitors' Pontoon Award of Contract

2. Taking into account the financial aspects of the tenders, detailed at Annex A it is recommended that the contract be awarded to Walcon.

Background – Batson pontoons

3. The Batson pontoons were commissioned over thirty years ago and subsequently extended over twenty years ago. They have given many years of excellent service. The pontoons are of a steel and concrete construction and secured to the sea bed on chains. The current pontoon system provides 245 berths for vessels with a beam of up to two metres.
4. The Batson pontoons were planned to be replaced in Financial Year 2010/11¹ but, following the experience of the past twelve months it is unlikely that these pontoons will remain serviceable and fit for purpose for another three seasons.
5. Over recent years the pontoon sections, which take the ground on every low tide, have been deteriorating rapidly and a number of sections have had to be replaced. During the spring of 2007 one of the end sections broke up just prior to the start of the season and was replaced, as an interim measure, with a section of plastic cubi floats. During the winter of 2007/08 a further pontoon section disintegrated forcing a complete reorganisation of the pontoon sections. The complete south eastern leg of the pontoon system and one of the walkway sections was replaced with the redundant residents' deep water pontoon sections. This enabled the plastic pontoon to be replaced. This work had only just been completed when the storms of early March 2008 destroyed another section of pontoon. This was again replaced with a redundant deep water pontoon but, because the float size of the deep water pontoons is approximately 0.3 metres deeper than the old foreshore pontoons, a connecting, articulated bridge had to be manufactured. The ongoing maintenance of these pontoons is being frustrated by the ever reducing stock of replacement sections and will soon be unmanageable. New sections have been manufactured by the Harbour Staff in the past but this is an expensive and time consuming process. In the event of there being no replacement sections, berths and associated income will have to be sacrificed and customers disappointed.
6. It is considered that the only satisfactory way ahead is to replace the Batson pontoons as soon as possible.

Batson pontoons – Establishing the requirement

7. Being connected to the shore with a bridge, the Batson pontoon system is as close to a marina as Salcombe has, but it dries on every low tide which presents considerable tidal constraints. Any talk of replacing Batson pontoons immediately elicits calls for dredging to improve tidal access. This course of action is considered totally impractical in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) where it is unimaginable that capital dredging would be authorised. An assumption has therefore been made that any replacement pontoon system would dry at low water and therefore would cater for a similar vessel to those already berthed at Batson.
8. A proportion of the fundus and the hinterland adjacent to the Batson pontoons is owned by South Hams District Council. The remainder of the fundus is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and leased to the Harbour Authority. The hinterland is currently used for boat parking and has considerable development potential. Ideally the replacement pontoon system would be coordinated and

¹ Strategic Business Plan Dated 1 August 2007.

coherent with the re-development of the Batson Creek Car Parks, however, SHDC's plans for this land are currently immature and it is unlikely that any development will take place before the pontoon requires replacement. It is therefore essential that any development of the Harbour Authorities pontoons survives any redevelopment of the Creek Car Parks. This would be best achieved by moving the access bridge from its current location in the middle of the boat park the new slipway bridge. This will involve a small re-design of the pontoon layout but could be easily accommodated. A re-design could also contribute positively to the tender berthing and storage solution.

9. Reducing maintenance is fundamental to the future viability of the harbour and should be a principal factor in the design and the tender technical specification. The pontoons will need to be robust enough to take the ground and articulated to enable changes in the sea bed topography to be coped with. Currently, apart from pontoon repairs and preventative maintenance, the largest maintenance requirement comes from the annual maintenance of the chains. There are two sets of chains, heavy ground chains to secure the pontoons and lighter back chains to secure the boats. The maintenance could be markedly reduced by securing the pontoons on steel piles. This is estimated would save approximately 70 man hours each winter and the cost of replacement chains , which is approximately £3,000/ year. It would also make the structure more stable, thus reducing the wear and tear on the pontoon joints caused by being secured on chains.

10. The tidal run which is experienced in Batson Creek, caused by tidal surges being funnelled and therefore amplified as they move up the estuary can be very destructive. The tidal height can rise and fall by more than a metre in seconds, which puts considerable strains on the marine infrastructure. To mitigate the effects of the "run" it would be necessary for the pontoons orientated north east south west, (across the creek, to be removable during the winter months.

Batson Pontoons – The way ahead

11. It is proposed that the Harbour Board recommend the replacement of the Batson Pontoons during financial year 2009/10, the outline financial implications are at Annex B.

12. The tender process should be commenced in order to refine the costs.

Strategic Risk Assessment

Opportunity/Risk	Issues / Obstacles	Benefits
A visiting yacht or a crew member may sustain physical damage or personal injury from the Visitor's Pontoon.	The visitors' pontoons are in a poor state of repair and require replacement.	Replacement will remove the risk of damage and injury and will enhance Salcombe's reputation with visiting yachtsmen.

Delaying the replacement of Whitestrand end pontoons.	Following a comprehensive survey of Whitestrand end pontoons it is assessed that they will provide at least one more years service.	Visitors' Pontoon can be replaced sooner, thus reducing the overall risk.
Failures of the Batson pontoon system.	There are no further spare pontoons available to utilise for repairs to the Batson Pontoon system, therefore further failures will result in loss of capacity, which will impact service delivery and income.	Replacement with a re-design can reduce the annual maintenance costs and contribute to resolving the tender parking problem.

Conclusion

13. Replacing the Visitors' pontoon during financial year 2008/09 will radically improve the berthing facilities for visiting vessels, which is currently very much below the expected standard.
14. The rapidly deteriorating state of the Batson Pontoons has increased the urgency for their replacement. Early replacement in financial year 2009/10 will reduce the risk of a catastrophic failure as well as improving the quality of facilities and reducing maintenance costs.

Ian Gibson
Head of Service Salcombe Harbour

Salcombe Harbour Board
2 June 2008

Background Documents:

Strategic Business Plan 2007-2011, 1st Edition dated 2 August 2007.

Annexes:

- A. Tender details for replacement Visitors' Pontoon. (Exempt)
- B. Batson Pontoons, financial details. (Exempt)