

Salcombe Harbour Board – 14 January 2008**BOAT PARK OPERATIONS****Report of Head of Service Salcombe Harbour****Statutory Powers: Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954**

Financial Implications: None in the preparation of this report other than officer time. However, there will be financial implications for South Hams District Council, depending on which option is chosen for the delivery of the winter storage service.

Purpose

To update Members on the further thoughts of the Harbour Board's Working Group looking at Creek Boat Park winter storage arrangements.

The operation of the Council's car park at Batson as a winter boat park supports the objectives of good jobs (CP2), retention of the district's character (CP3), an accessible council (CP5) and value for money (CP6).

Recommendations

That the Harbour Board:

Notes the work of the Harbour Board's Working Group and agrees in principle with the way forward as outlined in this report.

Background

1. Batson Creek Car Park is owned by South Hams District Council (SHDC) and is managed by "Street Scene". It does not form part of the responsibilities of Salcombe Harbour Board (SHB) and all revenues from the boat park pass directly to SHDC. However, in the winter months, when the car park becomes a boat park, the Harbour Master supervises the boat park on behalf of SHDC. The boat storage facility is an integral part of the overall marine service provided to boat owners, which makes the Salcombe and Kingsbridge Estuary a leisure port.
2. The Harbour Board (SH 19/07) resolved to support the proposal to operate the Council's Creek car park along boatyard lines for winter storage of boats and to establish a Harbour Board Working Group to review a business case for boat park operations at Batson. The Board also recommended to Council to advertise for expressions of interest to operate the winter storage operation.

Current Situation

3. Lift out operations this winter were delayed due to a failure of the lifting contractor's crane. The lift out was completed with a "static" mobile hired by the contractor (the contractor's crane normally employs a "pick and carry" operation to move the boats to their storage area). The contractor plans to conduct the lift in with their own crane, which should be repaired before Easter 2008. Under the current shared use licence the lifting contractor has no contractual obligation to facilitate the lift out and in. Without the contractor's cooperation the majority of boats could not be lifted and the car park income would be dramatically reduced.
4. To improve the health and safety aspects of the current boat storage operation from this winter, a Code of Practice, based on the Yacht Harbours' Association Code of Practice has been introduced and the Council has employed a Boat Park Attendant to oversee the storage area during weekday normal working hours.
5. An open public meeting was held in Salcombe on 12 November 2007 to gather opinion from marine contractors on the current operation of the boat park and to get a feel for the type of services they provide and how they operate. The main comments were a dissatisfaction with restrictions on building temporary workshops in the boat park area and a general agreement that existing arrangements produced confusion and disturbance due to lack of organisation. A further open meeting will be held after the next Board meeting in January 2008.
6. The changes introduced for this winter to improve health and safety may not be universally welcomed by the marine contractors, but it is strongly believed that they have worked well and generally improved the overall safety and operation of the boat storage area. It is clear that more time and education will be needed before some of the more sceptical marine contractors can appreciate the need for change and the health and safety benefits that will follow.
7. Notwithstanding the changes to health and safety aspects of the boat storage area, the process for a customer to organise winter storage remains complicated with separate bookings required with:
 - Harbour Office for boat storage space
 - Lift out and in with lifting contractor
 - Towage
 - Power washing
 - Cradle storage
 - Repairs
 - Maintenance
8. As a consequence of the involvement of multiple agencies, there is a potential coordination problem which results in short notice changes with associated increased risk. It was the opinion of the Harbour Board Working Group that the current system does not represent best practice and, inherent in this system, is a serious risk of future accident with inadequate discharge of responsibility. Furthermore they felt that the service offered was not in the best interests of the facility users.

Way Ahead

9. That the SHDC invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified organisations to provide a winter boat storage service at the Batson Creek Car Park site to include the following level of service:
 - Management of the boat storage area between October and April.
 - Receiving bookings
 - Billing
 - Control access
 - Enable access for local marine contractors
 - Regulate activity
 - Provide security
 - Provide lift out and lift in
 - Provide chocking
 - Cradle storage
 - Cradle hire
 - Provide emergency lift out facilities throughout the year.
10. The agreement with SHDC should provide a level of contractual obligation to provide a level of service. The contract should include the financial arrangements between SHDC and the contracted organisation with sufficient checks and balances to ensure that value for money for the customer is maintained.
11. In order to assist SHDC the Harbour Board Working Group has looked at the Business Case for operating this facility in outline which is included in Appendix 1. The Board may wish to consider reserving its position however, until expressions of interest have been received.

Value for Money

12. Delivering Value for Money is one of the Council's corporate priorities. The selection of the most appropriate way to provide the winter storage service and to reduce the risks associated with the operation will ultimately directly affect the value for money derived from this service.

Risk Assessment

Risk / Opportunity	Issues / Obstacles	Benefits
SHDC fail to provide a service that has been provided for a number of years, thus affecting Council reputation.	Currently there is no contractual obligation on any contractor to lift boats to the car park or to launch again in the spring.	SHDC establish a contract with a suitably equipped and qualified organisation to provide the service.
Fatality or serious injury following an accident in SHDC car park whilst it is being operated as a boat park.	There are a number of different contractors providing similar services which require coordination to reduce the risks involved.	A Code of Practice has been introduced and an attendant to manage the storage area. The next step will be to provide a complete storage service from a single contractor who can manage the risks on the site to an acceptable level.

Conclusion

13. The current arrangements for the operation of the Batson car park for winter boat storage are not considered sustainable. The preferred way ahead is for the District Council to advertise for expressions of interest for operators who wish to provide a winter storage service on its Creek car park.

Ian Gibson
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Salcombe Harbour Board
14 January 2008

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Background Documents:

None

Appendix 1 - Benchmark Business Case for Delivery of Winter Storage Service
(Exempt Item)