

## ITEM

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### Salcombe Harbour Board - 16 March 2004

#### SCOBLE TRANSITS

#### Report by the Chief Environment and Development Officer

**Statutory Powers:** The Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954.

**Financial Implications:** Expenditure of £3,000.00 for the purchase of new navigational equipment to be funded from the Revenue Reserve. Annual savings of at least £500 for the non-replacement of batteries.

#### Purpose

1. This report asks the board to consider a new arrangement for the leading lights locally known as the Scoble transits. It advises the Board about the Council's responsibilities as lighthouse authority and the need to consult with statutory bodies and harbour users should changes to navigational aids in the Harbour be considered.
2. This proposal is directly linked to corporate priority six – 'the improvement of core services in a cost effective way'.

#### Recommendation

##### That the Board RESOLVES:-

- (i) to instruct the Harbour Master to further investigate the possible new arrangements to the Scoble transits and report back to the Board.
- (ii) to consult with Trinity House and harbour users on the new arrangements.
- (iii) to involve the Council's Property Services Manager and Legal Services in discussions with the landowner to ensure the Council's interests are preserved.

#### Background

3. The Scoble transits were established many years ago with the approval of Trinity house, a lease with the landowner to site the lights on private land is current. They consist of an upper and lower light located in private field near Scoble Point, the upper light sits on a wall whilst the lower is located on a post close to the edge of the field. To use the lights, once Blackstone Rock is abeam to starboard the main fairway course of 042 T can be set to make good a course safely into the harbour on the lights.
4. The pole that supports the lower light has caused concerns as the bank above the foreshore is eroding into the field and is undermining the support for the pole. It will not be long before a new arrangement will have to be installed to the lower light that will obviously incur costs. Therefore the Harbour Master

began investigating possible alternative arrangements for the leading lights themselves. Additionally, during the height of the summer when the Harbour is busy and numerous visiting yachts sit on the visitor moorings in the centre of the Harbour, making good a course into the Harbour it is sometimes the case that the lower light is obscured.

5. At first the focus was on the establishment of a new support for the lower light. But all options were extremely costly and with the existing lights powered by battery these need to be periodically serviced and changed when required. Therefore placing a pole on the foreshore of any substantial height would cause unnecessary health and safety issues to Harbour staff.
6. Attention was, therefore, switched to the upper light that again is battery-powered but is far more accessible. Nevertheless Harbour staff need to service the unit on an annual basis. With the advance of technology we were able to find an alternative light source that is solar power driven and therefore does not require batteries. The configuration of the light uses a light beam as opposed to flashing lights. Therefore, navigating into the Harbour one would pick up a white light and any deviation of 2 degrees either side and the light would not be seen. By adopting this method there would be no requirement for a lower light.
7. The cost of the unit is in the order of £3,000 and the installation could easily be undertaken by Harbour staff. Savings on an annual basis would be at least £500 in the non-replacement of the batteries. The initial cost of the unit may well be in the order of the potential expenditure for the remedial works to the existing lower light support.

#### **Agreement with Landowner**

8. The Council has a lease with the land owner of the field on which the Scoble transits are sited. Should the Board wish to proceed with the proposal the Property Services Manager and Legal Service must be involved in future discussions with the landowner.

#### **Port Marine Safety Code**

9. The Port Marine Safety Code describes the general requirements imposed upon a harbour authority under its conservancy duty, 'a harbour authority has a duty to conserve the harbour so that it is fit for use as a port, and a duty of reasonable care to see that the harbour is in a fit condition for a vessel to use it'.
10. Section 53 of the Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Order 1954 confirms that the Council is the local lighthouse authority within the limits of the Harbour, for the purposes of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894.

#### **Consultation**

11. Trinity House as the general lighthouse authority inspects all navigational marks and beacons under the charge of the Salcombe Harbour Authority on an annual basis. The inspector from Trinity House is scheduled to visit this year on Monday, 10 May 2004 and during his inspection the Harbour Master will consult over this matter on the Board's behalf.

12. Should the Board agree in principle to the proposal and Trinity House has raised no objections, then the Board may wish to consider the best way to consult with Harbour users.

### **Risk assessment**

13. It is important that all Council services constantly review the delivery of their services to ensure efficiency and best value. Provided Trinity House agrees to the boards proposal and harbour users are adequately consulted the new arrangements will not reduce the level of service to the customer in the future.

### **Human rights**

14. None for the purpose of this report.

### **Conclusion**

15. The leading lights at Scoble Point are an important navigational aid for safe navigation in the Harbour. They have been established for many years and it is only recently when it was reported that the support of the lower light required attention that the decision was taken to investigate alternative arrangements that provide best value to the Board and the harbour customer.
16. There is still a lot of work to be done to resolve all the issues but with the Board's support in principle Officers of the Council will bring back a report in the autumn for the Board's further consideration.

Stephen Tooke  
Harbour Master

Salcombe Harbour Board  
16 March 2004

Alan Robinson  
Chief Environment and Development Officer

### **Background Documents**

Port Marine Safety Code  
Pier and Harbour (Salcombe) Confirmation Order 1954