

Extract From Executive Minutes on 6 March 2008

E.105/07 CASTLE COVE, DARTMOUTH

Members considered a report which set out proposals for the re-creation of a link path at Castle Cove between the existing footpath and the bathing platform. The report sought approval for a funding contribution from South Hams District Council towards the project, subject to an equivalent contribution being generated locally. Members were being requested to allocate up to £35,000 (50% of the estimated cost) for the re-instatement of this access path to the bathing platform at Castle Cove.

During discussion, particular reference was made to a non-Executive Members' concern over the health and safety implications and legal obligations for the Council should an incident on the cliff face occur. Although understanding why this facility would benefit Dartmouth, this point was stressed by a number of concerned Members. Furthermore, a number of non-Executive Members also demonstrated concern for the costs implications, not only up front, but also the unknown continuing costs of maintaining the cliff face to ensure it was safe for the public to proceed along the link path. In response to these concerns, Members were advised that these implications had been given consideration and regardless of whether or not the link path was established, the Council still had an obligation to maintain the cliff face as bathers still used the beach and footpath. Regular inspections were already carried out at Castle Cove and contractors were employed annually to ensure loose rocks were removed safely.

However, concerned Members were still hesitant to support this proposal. It was suggested that once the works had been complete the Council pass on ownership of the area to a local group or perhaps the Town Council. However, officers advised that this route had been explored and would continue to be, but it had been difficult to obtain support. Moreover, it was the Council's obligation to ensure public safety and therefore any group/organisation interested in taking on the ownership would still have to demonstrate its ability to address this issue.

In conclusion, a Member proposed that an addition on the recommendation (as circulated in the presented report) be included to ensure that maintenance of the link path be transferred to a 'suitably responsible' local trust.

It was therefore:-

RESOLVED

That:-

- a) a contribution of up to £35,000 for re-instatement of the path to Castle Cove bathing platform subject to an equivalent level of contribution from locally generated sources be allocated; and
- b) following re-instatement of the path, ongoing liability for its repair and maintenance be transferred to a suitably responsible local trust which would be set up for this purpose.