



SOUTHWOLD HARBOUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22 September 2022

Subject	Caravan Site Consultation
Supporting Officer	Kerry Blair Head of Operations Kerry.blair@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	Southwold

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

To provide members with an update and confirm the questions for the Southwold Caravan and Campsite consultation.

Recommendation/s:

That the Harbour Management Committee (HMC) recommend that the Leader of the Council approve the questions contained in this report as the basis for a consultation on the Southwold Caravan and Campsite.

Impact Assessment

Governance:

Part of the Southwold Caravan Site is located within the Harbour Undertaking as set out in the 1933 Harbour Order. The HMC is required to make recommendations relating to changes in this location.

Environmental:

Any redevelopment of the Caravan Site could have an impact on the ecology of the area. In addition, consideration will need to be given to the sustainability of any changes made. This report does not contain any matters for decision at this stage, but HMC members will need to consider the results of any environmental surveys before making any recommendations in the future.

SCOA members have provided feedback on proposals via an online questionnaire. The forthcoming consultation will include questions on sustainability and the environmental aspirations of the redevelopment.

Equalities and Diversity

This report does not ask HMC members to take any decisions that may have an impact on E&D. However, any changes that are proposed for the site – in particular, changes to leases, fees and charges and license arrangements will need to be subject to an E&D impact assessment.

Financial:

No impacts

Legal:

None

Risk:

None

Harbour Business Plan Priorities

To be added when the plan is in place.

East Suffolk Council Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the themes of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal:		
T01	Growing our Economy	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	In 2019, East Suffolk Council employed an external consultant to carry out a review of Southwold Caravan and Camping Site, and to make recommendations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve service provision – mainly through the installation of water and power provision to each site. • Modernise the site – in a way that is sensitive to local wishes • Present options for changing the lease and license arrangements between the council and static caravan owners.
1.2	The report has been shared with Southwold Caravan Owners Association (SCOA) – who have carried out a survey of their members and provided a detailed response to the proposals in the report.
1.3	On the 1 st September, the Caravan Site Redevelopment working group met to agree next steps. Attendees included Cllr Letitia Smith (Chair), Cllr Maurice Cook, Alastair MacFarlane, Diane Perry Yates, Cllr Mary Rudd Kerry Blair (Head of Operations)
1.5	The meeting discussed the proposals in the Rural Solutions development report ('the report') and heard from the Chair of SCOA about the views of members. Issues for consultation were then discussed – and it these issues that are being brought to the HMC for discussion and approval.

2 Current position	
2.1	The Rural Solutions report made the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the register of all caravans by manufacturer, date of manufacture / age, type, and size, together with insurance details. The intention is to promote the use of newer caravans to improve both appearance and compliance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of licence agreements for all static owners in line with BH&HPA guidelines. Specifically – to offer longer period of tenure than the current annual license model • Implementation of the policy of caravan replacement / exchange for older inappropriate units / notification of implementation upon redevelopment. This is in support of the first objective. • Proactive approach to supplier agreements with several preferred caravan manufacturers, for example Pemberton, ABI, Willerby, and or second-hand unit provision. This brokerage process to be managed by the Site management. • Implementation of a new licence agreement policy defining the commission terms for the private sale of caravans – in support of the objective above. • Improved service provision across the site including electrical, water and sewage, in particular to those caravans currently on individual separate electrical supplies. • Review of all current pitch spacing and the site layout, to consider potential redevelopment spacing criteria, roadways etc. • Improvements to service standards: that management should seek to implement a series of KPI's against which to analyse the park performance objectively, including touring pitch occupation performance, average unit rates, revenue per available unit, static pitch churn rates, commissions levels (new, second hand etc), yearly competitor pitch rate comparisons etc.
2.5	<p>The report produced by SCOA on the back of the survey contained several points – both recommendations and issues for consideration. In summary, these included responses on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restrictions and constraints offered by the current site. The size of pitches and the need to ensure a quality outlook for customers. • The phasing of the works – proposed over three years – and the impact on customers. • The assumptions on fees – and comments on the ‘comparable’ on which the report is based. • The desirability of additional services (bar, leisure facilities, play areas) for existing customers. • Comments on the need to retain the character of the existing site • Comments on how to ensure that a fair price is charged through metering of electricity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of materials – such as concrete for hardstanding – and their environmental and aesthetic impact. • Opposition to the proposal in the RS report that site management act as a ‘broker’ for new caravan sales – as is standard practise elsewhere. • Issues relating to environmental sustainability.
2.6	<p>The purpose of the consultation is threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow members to provide input into the proposals • To allow wider stakeholders – including Southwold Town Council and the Stakeholder Advisory Group – to provide views on the proposed changes. • To provide data to allow the HMC and ESC to make decisions about the redevelopment of the site.

3 How to address current situation

3.1	The HMC values the contribution that SCOA has made through the conducting of the survey and the associated report.
3.2	The Working Group proposes the following areas be explored further during a consultation process. Suggested questions are set out below:
3.3	<p><u>Service level agreement – including expectations and standards, based on past discussions</u> “Would you support the introduction of a service level agreement to set out the management standards for the site? Yes/ No” “If you answered yes – which of the following is most important to you? Grounds maintenance. Building cleanliness. Promptness of response. Security. Online information. Other”</p> <p><u>Licensing and tenure</u> “The report proposes a 10–20-year license agreement instead of the rolling annual license currently offered. Would you support a longer period of tenure (Yes/ No)? Would you be more likely to invest in a new caravan (Yes/No)”?</p> <p><u>Sub-letting – allow all subletting, restrict to friends and family, or no sub-letting</u> “Would you support the ability to sublet your caravan under the new agreement? Yes/ No Would you restrict the ability to sublet to friends and family only?”</p> <p><u>Phasing of works</u> “Would you prefer to see the works to improve the site phased over three years in order to minimise disruption?”</p> <p><u>Amenities</u> “Would you want to see additional amenities on site? If so – what?” (Free text)</p>

	<p><u>Planting and ecology</u> “Would you like to see the following as part of any redevelopment?”</p> <p>Wildlife areas (for example, areas of grassland) Bat and bird boxes Sustainable planting Solar panels Sustainable planting Other</p> <p><u>Sales of caravans</u> “The report proposes that residents would be required to purchase a van and that van age be restricted to 15 years. In addition, that residents would purchase a van from an approved suppliers list. What is important to you when purchasing a van through this arrangement:</p> <p>Price Quality Brand/ Manufacturer Other</p> <p>What manufacturers would you want to see on the preferred supplier list? (Free choice)”</p> <p><u>Touring side proposals – increases in pitches</u> “Would you support an increase in the number of tents and campervans on the site”</p> <p><u>Security and public access</u> “What security arrangements would you like to see on the site” (Free text)</p> <p>What do you see at the most important factor in the redevelopment of the site?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving facilities • Improving appearance • Maintaining character • Increasing tourism • Increasing income to the local area • Other (free text)”
3.4	<p>It was agreed that a broad range of methods need to be employed to capture views. This is to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct approaches via SCOA • Consultation with the SAG • Publishing of a SurveyMonkey report online – promoted by ESC • Face to face meetings on the site

4 Reason/s for recommendation	
4.1	The HMC are asked to approve the above questions as basis for the consultation on the site.

Appendices

Appendices:
None

Background reference papers:
None