

Report to: Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: 20th March 2017

Report Title: Seafront Access Audit

Report By: Nick Sangster, Resort Services Manager

Purpose of Report

The report presents the findings of the recently completed audit of access provision for facilities and events on Hastings seafront and foreshore.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. The recommendations are explored and costed to allow inclusion in the Foreshore Trust Business Plan where appropriate and subject to necessary funding**

Introduction

1. Informal access audits were undertaken by the Hastings and Rother Disability Forum (HRDF) / East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA) more than 10 years ago and a number of improvements were made as a result. In addition, Hastings Borough Council has also used external agencies to provide access guides to the main beaches.
2. The access audit undertaken by Disability Inclusion CIC was commissioned jointly by the Foreshore Trust and Hastings Borough Council and sets out to review and update the current arrangements and report on the outcome.

Scope, Brief and Methodology

3. The aim of the audit was to identify and review current arrangements and access improvements to the main resort beaches at Pelham in Hastings and Marina in St Leonards, and to encourage wider use of the promenade and foreshore.
4. This audit primarily looks at the Seaside and Blue Flag Award Beaches at Pelham in Hastings and Marina in St Leonards. It also identifies other potential general improvements to encourage greater use of other parts of the promenade and beach, including specific events and activities.
5. This audit has been carried out by Disability Inclusion CIC, with support from volunteers of the HAVE (Hastings Access to Venues and Events) group and after initial consultation with HRDF. Disability Inclusion is a User-Led Organisation, with all of its Directors being disabled people.
6. A number of site visits along the seafront were carried out by disabled people with a range of impairments, and this information has been combined with research into the different types of information provided for visitors to the town.

Audit Findings and Recommendations

7. The review considered existing facilities and arrangements, identified areas for improvement and suggests a list of prioritised recommendations.
8. Generally the report recognises the improvements that have been made in access to many areas of the seafront itself as well as information and facilities.
9. There are a range of improvements that could be made, subject to necessary funding and practical solutions being found, covering four main types.
10. Information – requires rationalising and updating, there is potential to utilise new technology more effectively.
11. Arrangements – review existing for public/private toilets and with leaseholders and other organisations.

12. Facilities – consider the trial of new equipment and the adaptation of some existing physical assets.
13. Events – there is scope to both encourage event organisers to consider access more carefully, as well as promoting accessible events and existing resources e.g. temporary matting

Next Steps

14. Although large parts of the seafront and Foreshore are owned by the Foreshore Trust the report does cover areas owned and managed by Hastings Borough Council and leased to others. Further consultation on specific recommendations will be required.
15. Some of the recommendations do not necessarily have a significant cost attached i.e. website continuity but a realistic timescale will need to be agreed.
16. For those agreed items that do have a cost, estimates need to be secured to allow a prioritised programme of improvements to be included in the Foreshore Trust Business Plan and Hastings Borough Council Seafront Strategy where appropriate or to seek further additional or external funding.

Wards Affected

Castle, Central St Leonards, Old Town, West St Leonards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	X
Risk Management	
Economic/Financial Implications	
Human Rights Act	X
Organisational Consequences	
Local People's Views	

Additional Information

Hastings and St Leonards Seafront Access Audit

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