

***Beach huts option
appraisal report 2011
Consultative draft
for discussion***



Beach huts option appraisal

Consultative draft report for discussion – May 2011

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Background documents

Beach Hut Scrutiny Review 2009

Local Plan <http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/main.cfm?objectid=948>

Shoreline Management Plan

<http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/main.cfm?objectid=74>

Minutes of community steering group meeting 28.10.2010

Minutes of community steering group meeting 15.12.2010

Minutes of community steering group meeting 26.1.2011

Minutes of community steering group meeting 17.3.2011

Minutes of community steering group meeting 10.5.2011

CONSULTATION DRAFT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to consider options for beach huts along the coastline of Canterbury district and, if appropriate, propose sites for further feasibility work. This will then be developed into a beach hut strategy.
- 1.2 The Beach Hut Overview and Scrutiny report in March 2009 recommended 'That, subject to the implementation of the "infill" pilot study, a hut strategy should be developed by 2009 setting out clear guidelines on increasing beach hut sites:
 - Numbers
 - Potential locations
 - Availability
 - Future use (including licence and rental)
- 1.3 It should be noted that the proposed "infill" pilot studies obtained planning permission in 2009 but are not being pursued.
- 1.4 The option appraisal process has been based on national best practice and steered by community partners. The community partners are the Whitstable Society and Herne Bay Residents Association as they are formal consultees on planning issues in their respective towns, Whitstable Harbour Board as a provider of beach huts, Tankerton Bay Beach Hut Association and Herne Bay Beach Hut Association as community groups with an interest in beach huts. The community steering group has been facilitated by Council Community Development officers and supported by: Legal Services, Engineers, Planning Department, Community Safety Unit, Foreshore and Town Centre Partnership.
- 1.5 The Community Steering Group is confident that this report is the start of a process that can set out clear guidance on beach hut provision. Any option appraisal is open to scrutiny, all sites considered have their strengths and weaknesses and public consultation may raise further issues.
- 1.6 This report is available for all: hard copies in the Whitstable Library, Whitstable Harbour Office, the Herne Bay Area Office Herne Bay and the council offices Canterbury plus online on the council website.
- 1.7 In addition resident associations and community groups are being invited to view the documents on line or in hard copy at the above and this consultative report will be presented to the public area member's panels for Herne Bay and Whitstable in June 2011.
- 1.8 The closing date for comments on the consultative report is 4th July 2011 and these will be considered for a final report to Canterbury City Council's Executive for a decision on 28 July 2011.
- 1.9 If feasibility work is required, it would take place in 2011 with the aim of a report in early 2012.

1.10 The option appraisal and feasibility study will form the basis of the beach hut strategy and will not prejudice a planning application. If a site is eventually proposed to be delivered planning permission will be required.

2. Historical background

2.1 Beach huts are an iconic feature of Herne Bay seafront, their long history is summarised below.

2.2 Bathing machines to the east of Canterbury Road are shown in a print of 1823. In Capper's Guide Book of 1833 the 'Bathing Houses' are shown near where the Kings Hall now is. The East Cliff Baths owned by John Homerson, later by George Rogers had bathing machines. At the west end of Central Parade were the St George's Baths.

2.3 In 1912 Herne Bay Urban District Council opened their extensive East Cliff Bathing cabins. Some of the commercial bathing machines had their wheels removed and were positioned on stilts above the beach. By then the council's East Cliff bathing huts were three rows deep with wooden huts alongside and behind the concrete cabins.

2.4 A print of 1837, promoting the pier, shows huts below St Georges Terrace and bathing machines in front of them. A 1923 photograph of the St George's Baths shows Holness' range of beach huts. The council's West Bathing station, 'the Nuns' Huts' was beyond Holness' bathing area and Lane End.

2.5 In 1926 the Herne Bay Urban Council bought out the last private bathing rights. Bathing machines and commercial bathing cabins disappeared over the next few years. In 1927 the Town Guide lists three places at which bathing machines were sited and bathing cabins were available on the East and West beaches.

2.6 Visitors could pitch their own tents below the East and West Cliffs. The tents shown beyond Lane End formed an almost continuous line. They began to be mingled with and eventually replaced by beach huts which had to be removed from the beach each winter. At first the huts were of similar floor plan but of different designs and roof profiles. During the 1930s the council began to recommend a standard design with a ridged roof and this became more usual as the older huts were replaced.

2.7 The great storm surge of 1953, and the storm of 1978 that broke the pier, destroyed many of the beach huts. Most of the replacement huts were made to the standard design that is common today.

2.8 In the 1960s beach hut usage declined and it was not until the mid 1990s that beach huts came back into fashion.

2.9 Beach huts in the Whitstable area were part of the Victorian period, when the archetypal bathing huts on wheels were a familiar sight on Whitstable and

Tankerton beaches, the beach huts, as they became known, evolved into more social places for families to enjoy.

- 2.10 Huts in the 1920s were of a very random style, with some sporting decorative trellis on the side, and Primus stoves and tea making facilities came into being.
- 2.11 It is said that Whitstable Urban District Council bought the Slopes for £750 during this period; previously the Slopes were offered free if the Council would make up the Tankerton Estate roads.
- 2.12 During the Second World War, most of the huts were removed (there was a rumour that they were required by the military, although no one knows why).
- 2.13 There was a huge beach bonfire on VJ Night, and the couple of remaining huts fell victim to the flames. When they were replaced only the standard type was allowed, and they had to be painted green, blue, or brown. Eventually, the standard Tankerton pattern came into being, with integral balconies.
- 2.14 There were two rows of huts at the time, with the present path behind, as it is now at Tankerton West. Below the flagpole was a similar, larger hut that sold teas and ices.
- 2.15 After the War, apprentices at Luff's wood yard were expected to build beach huts as part of their training.
- 2.16 In the 1960s, the huts were cleared for a second time when the Slopes were graded and the thick shrubbery was removed. The huts that replaced these had a quiet period after this, especially from the 1970s onwards, when cheap holiday abroad tempted holidaymakers, but they are enjoying a welcome resurgence again.

3. Current position

- 3.1 **Whitstable:** There is a mixed market for beach huts in Whitstable with a range of providers:

The Seasalter Shellfish Company and Goldfinch Trust operate a number of beach huts each at West Beach – **see map A and B**

The Whitstable Oyster Fisheries Company operates beach huts for rent at Island Wall – **see map C**.

The Whitstable Oyster Fisheries Company and Whitstable Harbour Board operates beach huts for rent and is currently constructing a further eight at Beach Walk at the time of writing this report – **see map D**

There are privately owned beach huts at Tankerton Slopes (329) – **see map E and F**, at Marine Crescent (41) and Long Rock (12) – **see map G**. These

are located on council land with an annual agreement that is automatically renewed if terms and conditions are met.

Apart from the Harbour Board huts all the huts are privately owned and the land is licenced / leased to the owner from the Landlord.

- 3.2 The Tankerton Slopes, Marine Crescent and Long Rock beach hut sites are within the proposed Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Coastal Park.
- 3.3 The Whitstable beach hut design tends to be approximately 40% bigger than Herne Bay's beach hut design. In addition they tend to be in rows, for instance back to back at Long Beach or in three rows facing the sea at Tankerton Slopes.
- 3.4 **Herne Bay:** There are 248 beach huts at Spa Esplanade Herne Bay – see **map H and I**. All are in a single row along the beach adjacent to the sea wall. In many ways the single row of beach huts is part of the traditional image or character of Herne Bay. All the beach huts are privately owned but located on council land with an annual agreement that is automatically renewed if terms and conditions are met.
- 3.5 The Spa Esplanade is within the proposed Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Coastal Park.
- 3.6 The Herne Bay Regeneration action plan is an overarching plan for Herne Bay; however specific issues for the seafront are reflected in Chapter 5: Recreation, Leisure and Community Facilities and Chapter 6: Tourism and Seaside Economy. There are several specific actions (HB 11, HB 14 and HB 16) that link into the objective of 'Improving the vibrancy and attractiveness of Herne Bay as a seaside tourist destination.'
- 3.8 Another objective is HB 17 'protection of the marine environment' which links into the 'Thanet and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area' (SPA) plus the Ramsar site of internationally designated wetland. The aim of these policies is to protect the marine environment and wildlife adjacent to the Herne Bay Downs.

4 The process

- 4.1 The process has been split into three sections: Option appraisal to consider sites, feasibility studies to consider beach huts on some sites and finally a beach hut strategy.
- 4.2 The basic option appraisal and feasibility process was agreed by the community steering group as follows:
 - Agree area to be considered
 - Initial identification of sites
 - Agree basic criteria
 - Agree option appraisal assessment matrix and scoring

- Undertake site visits
 - Use basic criteria to filter out sites
 - Use option appraisal assessment matrix and scoring to assess remaining potential sites
 - SWOT analysis of potential sites
 - Consider preferred sites for feasibility study
- 4.3 At this point, this report is circulated to the community and community groups for consultation, the report will be amended to reflect feedback from the wider community consultation and a final report issued to the Canterbury City Council Executive for a decision to undertake feasibility studies or not.
- 4.4 If a site feasibility study is required it would focus on:
- Clarify demand
 - Numbers of beach huts on a site
 - Capital costs for each site
 - Capital finance options – internal/external funding opportunities
 - Consider disposal options whether to sell the beach huts with an agreement or rent beach huts (weekly/monthly)
 - Management options and revenue costs for each site
 - Reconsider planning policies as specific details of sites evolve, plus consider issues such as Habitat Regulations Assessment
 - Statutory consultation such as: Environment Agency, Kent Highways, Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust
 - Deliverability
- 4.5 The option of rent or sale will be fully explored in the feasibility study stage but it should be noted that the Whitstable Society could support beach huts on protected open space only if they are to rent.
- 4.6 At this stage the option appraisal report and feasibility reports will be pulled together to form a Beach Hut Strategy.
- 4.7 Any site that comes forward for delivery will require planning permission through the standard process.

5 Key criteria consideration

Planning Policy

- 5.1 Planning policy is undergoing some potentially major amendments at the time of drafting this report. The South East plan is due to be revoked as part of the Localism Bill. However the policies still have meaningful weight at the time of writing this report. There are a number of significant national and local plan policies that impact on beach huts.
- 5.2 At the option appraisal stage planning policy input is guidance and the relevant policies need to be considered. If a site is proposed for feasibility

study then planning policies will be revisited as the feasibility process will start to consider exact numbers and locations of potential beach huts. This would be deemed as pre application planning advice.

- 5.3 If a site is then eventually proposed for delivery planning application will be submitted which shall include a formal consultation process which will include all concerned parties.
- 5.4 Planning permission will be required for all infill or new beach huts sites.
- 5.5 National planning policy implications include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the marine based RAMSAR and Thanet and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area. These are illustrated in **map J, K and map I** and are summarised below:

Site of Special Scientific Interest

SSSIs are the countries very best wildlife and geological sites. They are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Special Protection Areas

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the 'Birds Directive 1979' which provides enhanced protection given by the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status all SPAs also hold.

RAMSAR sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention (1971). As a matter of policy, Ramsar sites in England are protected as European sites (as set out in The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (SI No. 2010/490).

- 5.4 The Herne Bay Area Action Plan contains a policy, HB17, which is linked to the above designations, sets out quite strict criteria in relation to the assessment of proposals, including the potential requirement for 'appropriate assessment'. Policy HB16 relating to beach and water sports facilities, also sets out requirements in relation to the adjoining European wildlife sites. These policies were agreed, following extensive negotiations with Natural England and the Kent Wildlife Trust, in order that the Area Action Plan could proceed.
- 5.5 In addition there is a range of national Planning Policy statements, those applicable to the coast and beach huts are also covered by the Local Plan policies.

- 5.6 South East Plan policy EKA7 which refers to integrated coastal management and Natural Park also needs to be considered. South East plan policy NRM8 refers to coastal management, and criteria (iv) is relevant; it states 'Avoid built development on the undeveloped coastline unless it specifically requires a rural coastal location, meets the sequential test set out in planning policy statement 25: Development and Flood Risk and does not adversely affect environmental, cultural and recreational resources.'
- 5.7 The local plan policies relating to the district coastline and beach huts are: Protected Public Open Space (C24) Undeveloped Coast (C36) Green Gap (R8) Flooding (C32), Pedestrian and Cycle Routes (C3) plus Architectural Design (BE1).
- 5.8 Many of the sites considered in the option appraisal process are **Protected Existing Open Space; see Local Plan policy (C24)**. This states that proposals which would result in the loss of protected existing open space as shown on proposal maps (local plan insert maps) will only be permitted if:
- (a) There would be no material harm to the contribution the protected open space makes to the visual or recreational amenity in the area
 - (b) Where there would be material harm, this would be balanced against demonstrable need for the development
 - (c) There is no alternative site available to accommodate the proposed development, and any harm that might result from the development could be offset by the provision of other open space of comparable quality, size, character and usability in the locality
 - (d) The open space has been assessed by the council as making no positive contribution to its overall strategy on open space
- 5.8 Many of the sites considered (Seasalter, Swalecliffe, Bishopstone and Reculver) are within **Local Plan Policy C36, areas defined as 'undeveloped coast'** The Local Plan states 'Development will not be permitted if it detracts from the unspoilt scenic quality or scientific value of the undeveloped coast as shown on the proposals maps (local plan maps)'
- 5.9 The area between Whitstable and Herne Bay has a specific Local Plan policy known as **the Green Gap policy (R8)**
- Within the green gap identified on the proposal maps (local plan) development will only be permitted where it does not:
- (a) Significantly affect the open character of the Green Gap, or lead to a coalescence between existing settlements.
 - (b) Result in new isolated and obtrusive development within the Green Gap.
- 5.10 It goes on to state 'Proposals for open sports or recreational uses will be permitted subject to there being no overriding conflict with other policies and the wider objectives of the plan.'

5.11 Local Plan policy (C32) on flooding states:

'On sites that have not been previously developed as defined by the Environment Agency in Zones 2 and 3 or within the overtopping hazard zones as shown on the proposals maps no development will be permitted unless an exceptional justification can be demonstrated'

5.12 Much of the coastline is subject to a risk of flooding; this includes existing beach hut sites. In planning terms, flood risk is defined as Flood Zones and are based on Environmental Agency calculations about the risk. A Flood Zone rating of three equates to high risk in planning terms and flood mitigation work may be required to get planning permission. There will also be a need to consult with the Environment Agency on a site that is considered for a feasibility study

5.13 **Local Plan Policy C3 is the policy on cycle routes**, it states 'Land will be safeguarded for the proposed pedestrian and cycle routes, as shown on the proposal map.'

5.14 **Local Plan policy BE1 places an emphasis on high quality design** and will be a major consideration if a site is put forward as a feasibility study site, it states:

'The City Council will expect proposals of high quality design which respond to the objective of sustainable development. When considering any application for development the Council will have regard to the following considerations:

- (a) The need for development;
- (b) Accessibility and safe movement within the proposed development;
- (c) The landscape character of the locality and the way the development is integrated into the landscape;
- (d) The conservation and integration of natural features including trees and hedgerows to strengthen local distinctiveness, character and biodiversity;
- (e) The visual impact and impact on the local townscape character;
- (f) The form of the development: the efficient use of the land, layout, landscape density and mix, scale, massing, materials, finish and architectural detail;
- (g) The reduction in energy consumption by means of layout, design, construction and alternative technology;
- (h) Safety and security;
- (i) The privacy and amenity of the existing environment;
- (j) The compatibility of the use with the adjacent uses;
- (k) The need to keep the building in use and fit for purpose; and
- (l) Appropriate supplementary planning guidance adopted by the council.

5.15 The word infill can be interpreted in a number of ways. In planning terms it is defined as 'the completion of an otherwise substantially built up frontage by the filling of a narrow gap'.

- 5.16 To avoid any misunderstanding in this report and the process moving forward the community steering group proposed interpretation of infill for beach huts is 'to fill the gaps between existing beach huts within the boundary of existing beach huts'.
- 5.17 However, no beach huts will be placed in front of a dwelling's sea facing boundary, blocking a sea view. In addition sufficient access to the beach/ promenade will be retained at the base of sloped steps or paths.
- 5.18 If there is a desire to reinstate the end of a row of beach huts outside the existing beach hut boundary site this is not infill but will be considered as an extension and for planning purposes would be deemed to be a new site.
- 5.19 It should be noted that planning considers the amenity as a whole; however, the Council will need to consider whether the impact of the beach huts on the enjoyment of the open space is significant.

Legal issues

- 5.19 Legal Services have checked the title records to ensure that any site which moves forward to feasibility study stage is legally held by the council and any covenants that might impact on beach hut development have been considered to be irrelevant or unenforceable.

Coastal protection

- 5.20 The council is a major partner in the Shoreline Management Plan for the South East coastline and the engineers have used this in the consideration of the sites.
- 5.21 It is recognised that much of the coastline is at risk from flooding to some degree, this includes existing sites.
- 5.22 In addition the engineers have also considered general engineering issues and safety considerations on some sites, especially those locations on or near steep slopes or cliffs.

6 Area for consideration

- 6.1 The community steering group agreed to consider the whole of the coastline within the district from West Seasalter to Reculver, excluding Whitstable Harbour.

7 Identification of sites

- 7.1 The community steering group started with the 16 sites identified in the Beach Hut Scrutiny and Review Report March 2009 but decided to review the whole coastline from the western boundary at Seasalter to the eastern boundary at Reculver, excluding Whitstable Harbour. The site numbers started in the west (1) and finished in the east (31)

8 Criteria

- 8.1 The following criteria were used as a basic filtering process for all sites, and then an assessment matrix was used to assess and score the remaining potential sites.

Planning – Any major constraints that would prevent beach huts from being considered. (Note: planning is also in the assessment matrix)

Coastal protection – the coastline of Canterbury district is complex and in need of defence from the sea, therefore beach huts should not undermine coastal protection.

Legal issues – any restrictive legal issues or covenants that would prevent beach huts from being considered on a site.

9 Assessment matrix and scoring

- 9.1 The community steering group agreed the following assessment matrix shown in Table one below:

No	Matrix	Comment
1	Access to site Is the site accessible, is it viable for DDA requirements	Initially consider the site, discuss with Disability Access Group if site goes to feasibility stage
2	Accessibility – private car How well is the site served by road for cars and coaches?	Discuss with transport officers and Kent Highway Services
	How adequate is the parking or potential parking?	Discuss with transport officers / Kent Highway Services
3	Accessibility – public transport How easily accessible is the site by walking or cycling?	Discuss with transport officers / Kent Highway Services
	How easily accessible is the site by public transport?	Discuss with transport officers / Kent Highway Services
4	Planning issues Land classification in local plan, can it be used for beach huts?	See local plan at meeting and discuss with planning officers.
	Planning constraints – are there any clear planning constraints e.g. flooding, conservation area etc	See Local Plan at meeting and discuss with planning officers
	National Land Designations i.e. SSSI	Discuss with countryside officers

	site etc may place places restrictions or indeed rule out	and Planning
5	Market impact Benefit to economy, business etc	Discuss with Town Centre Manager and Economic Development
6	Access to services Public toilets , water etc	This can add value to the site
7	Community Safety Impact of beach huts on local community safety.	Discuss with Community Safety Unit
8	Links to other strategies/action plans IE Open Space Strategy or Herne Bay Regeneration Action Plan, Whitstable Harbour Strategic Plan etc	Desk top research

9.2 The community steering group agreed the scoring matrix as:
0 = Very poor, 1 = Satisfactory, 2 = Good, 3 = Very Good

9.3 The group decided not to set a threshold to progress to a feasibility study because a SWOT analysis was also used to help assess sites.

9.4 There is an element of subjectivity to any scoring system and scoring is of a site as a whole not related to a 'beach hut' on the site. Community partners input was vital and appropriate technical input was also used. It was agreed that the scores would be a group decision.

10 Site visits

10.1 Council officers undertook site visits and the community steering group put forward their local knowledge of each site. The site plans are attached in appendices 1 to 31. The site photographs of fully assessed site are included in the appropriate appendices.

11 Summary of assessment

11.1 The community steering group assessed each site; see full site assessments attached in appendices 1 – 31. The sites shown in Table two did not pass the initial criteria to be fully assessed or scored.

Table Two		
Site number	Name of site	Reason for not passing initial criteria
1	District boundary to Seasalter Sailing Club	Concerns due to Local Plan Policy C24 and C36 plus South East Plan EKA7 (NRM8) and an SSSI site. Site is mixed ownership.
2	Seasalter Sailing Club to Sluice Gates	Concerns over Local Plan policy C36 and C24 plus EKA7 (NRM8). General coastal protection (large sea defence wall) and practical engineering issues.
3	Sluice gates to Reeve Beach – Whitstable	Legal concerns, not owned by council, therefore do not consider for full assessment. Planning Policy C24 and part in Whitstable Conservation Area.
4	Reeves Beach – Whitstable	Planning policy C24 and Whitstable Conservation Area. Site is used as amenity open space with a concession and seating.
5	Reeves Beach to West Quay Whitstable Harbour	Planning policy C24 and Whitstable Conservation Area plus mostly in private ownership.
6	Scout Hut	Whitstable Harbour Board is constructing eight new Beach Huts on the site. Therefore do not consider site for assessment scoring.
7	Beach Walk	Some legal concerns due to an existing lease on site. Planning Policy C24 and Whitstable Conservation Area, propose not to consider for full assessment but review when lease is due for renewal.
8	Tower Hill – West	Planning concerns regarding site within Whitstable Conservation Area and Local Plan Policy C24, beach huts could block the view of residents and commercial properties within the proximity of site.
11	Tankerton Slopes – Central area	Planning concerns over Local Plan policy C24 and Land classification is SSSI.
15	Land east of skate park	Planning concerns over Local Plan policy C24 and Green Gap policy R8. In addition the site is within in Flood Zone 2/3.
16	Swalecliffe – Green Gap	Planning concerns over Local Plan policy C24 and Green Gap policy R8. In addition the site is within in Flood Zone 2/3. SSSI area.
17	Studd Hill West	Coastal protection and engineering concerns over steepness and stability of slopes plus the flat area is not large enough for development of beach huts. Local plan policy C24.
18	Studd Hill Central	Coastal protection and engineering concerns over steepness and stability of slopes plus the

Table Two		
Site number	Name of site	Reason for not passing initial criteria
		flat area is not large enough for development of beach huts. C24 planning policy concerns.
19	Studd Hill East	Planning concerns regarding C24, low flat space and a new site for beach huts would block the views of local residents.
24	Central Parade	The primary function of Neptune Arm and the beach is coastal protection; in addition, the beach is adjacent to mudflats. Further along the site, towards Kings Hall, it is very tight to the road. Planning concerns regarding Local Plan policy C24, Flood Zone 3 and within Herne Bay Conservation area.
25	The Downs West	The Downs are made of London Clay and are prone to land slips, therefore there is a significant coastal protection concerns regarding the soft landscaping in the area. The coastal protection includes drainage throughout the Downs and weights at the base to help maintain the slopes and protect the houses above. Construction above the drainage system could be detrimental to overall coastal protection in the area. Also planning concerns over Planning Policy C24 and part of site C36, EKA7, NRM8 and at eastern end SSSI
28	Steps and promenade along base of the Downs East	Planning concerns over Local Plan Policy C24 and C36 plus EKA7, NRM8 and SSSI site.
29	The Downs East	The Downs are made of London Clay and are prone to land slips, therefore there is a significant coastal protection concerns regarding the soft landscaping in the area. The coastal protection includes drainage throughout the Downs and weights at the base to help maintain the slopes and protect the houses above. Construction above the drainage system could be detrimental to overall coastal protection in the area. Also planning concerns over Planning Policy C24 and C36, EKA7, NRM8 and SSSI
30	Bishopstone Glen to Reculver	Planning concerns over Local Plan policy C24 and C36 plus EKA7, NRM8 and SSSI site. Also engineering concerns over stability of cliffs in the area.

Table Two		
Site number	Name of site	Reason for not passing initial criteria
31	Reculver Towers to district boundary	There are planning concerns regarding Local Plan policy C24 and C36 plus EKA7, NRM8 and SSSI site. Also engineering concerns about stability of some cliffs in area.

11.2 Sites 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26 and 27 passed the initial criteria and a summary of the assessments are set out below in Table three.

Table three		
Site number	Site name	Rationale
9	Tower Hill – East	The site is in the Whitstable Conservation Area and Local Plan Policy C24 protected open space. However, the site is not overlooked due to the relative steepness of the slopes and the fact that the public toilets block the view from Whitstable, so an option of a limited number of beach huts along base of slopes could be considered. Planning Policy concerns would need to be fully addressed if site went to feasibility study stage.
10	Tankerton slopes – West	An existing beach hut site within planning policy C24, opportunity for limited infill. No coastal protection or legal issues.
12	Tankerton Slopes – East	An existing beach hut site within planning policy C24, opportunity for limited infill. No coastal protection or legal issues.
13	Marine Crescent	An existing beach hut site within planning policy C24 opportunity for limited infill plus a potential new site between Sailing club and existing beach huts. No coastal protection or legal issues.
14	Priest and Sow	An existing beach hut site (Long Rock) within planning policy C24 plus C36 and EKA7 and NRM8. No coastal protection or legal issues.
20	Spa Esplanade – West	An existing beach hut site within planning policy C24 opportunity for limited infill. No coastal protection or legal issues.
21	Spa Esplanade – East	An existing beach hut site within planning policy C24 opportunity for limited infill. No coastal protection or legal issues.
22	Albany Drive to the Pier	Previously a beach hut site within planning

Table three		
Site number	Site name	Rationale
		policy C24 and flood zone 3 opportunity to extend existing beach huts. No coastal protection or legal issues but concerns from engineers regarding winter storms impact on the area.
23	Nuns Huts	Within planning policy C24, Herne Bay Conservation area, Herne Bay Regeneration Zone and flood zone 3. Some coastal protection concerns will need to be fully investigated. No legal issues. Consider for feasibility study to investigate an opportunity to restore historic beach huts.
26	Concrete plinths at base of Downs	Previously a beach hut site not in planning policy C24, above flood zone 3 and adjacent to C36 area, EKA7 and NRM8. No coastal protection or legal issues, but within the proposed Downs Village Green application area. Historic venue for beach huts therefore consider for feasibility study.
27	Upper Steps on promenade at base of Downs	Previously a beach hut site within planning policy C24, C36 and EKA7 and NRM8 plus SSSI. No coastal protection or legal issues, but within the proposed Downs Village green application area. Historic venue for beach huts therefore consider for feasibility study. Planning Policy concerns would need to be fully addressed if site went to feasibility study stage.

- 11.3 As mentioned previously scoring is subjective and is a guidance tool in the process. (0 = Very poor, 1 = Satisfactory, 2 = Good and 3 = Very good). Some of the assessment criteria are challenging to score for instance community safety or business impact.
- 11.4 Community Safety was discussed with the Community Safety Unit and in general terms, public open space that is visible to residents is less likely to be at risk. However, it is actually down to the actions of people not the beach hut or its location so you could take the view that all sites are equally at risk.
- 11.5 Business impact could be simply considered as the more huts, the more people, the more business. However it is dependent on the people using the beach huts, some spend in the local area some bring everything with them and do not spend in the local area. However, on balance an increase in beach huts could lead to an increase in business footfall.
- 11.6 A summary of the community steering group's scores is shown below in Table four overleaf.

Table four**Summary of assessed sites**

No	Access to site	Car access / parking	Public transport	Planning	Market impact	Access to service	Com safety	Strategic links	Total
9	3	2	3	6	3	3	1	1	22
10	3	4	3	7	3	3	1	1	25
12	3	4	3	7	3	3	1	0	24
No	Access to site	Car access / parking	Public transport	Planning	Market impact	Access to service	Com safety	Strategic links	Total
13	3	6	3	4	2	2	1	0	21
14	3	6	3	4	2	2	1	0	21
20	3	6	3	7	2	3	1	3	28
21	3	6	3	7	2	3	1	3	28
22	3	6	3	7	3	3	1	3	29
23	1	6	3	7	3	3	1	3	27
26	3	5	3	5	3	3	1	2	25
27	2	5	3	2	2	2	1	0	17

12 SWOT analysis

12.1 The community steering group used a traditional Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats analysis for each potential site to help with the option appraisal process. The SWOT analyses for each potential site are attached in appendices 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26 and 27.

12.2 There are a number of general issues that have come out of the process:

- Potential increase in parking pressure, especially in summer weekends.
- The recognition of potential increased footfall for local business generated by beach hut users, especially in sites near the towns.
- That beach huts can be vulnerable to vandalism, especially in isolated areas.
- The phrase infill can be confusing, therefore it is considered to be 'to fill the gaps between existing beach huts within an existing beach hut boundary site' However, no beach hut will be placed in front of a sea facing dwelling, obscuring sea views. Sufficient access to the beach /promenade will be retained at the base of sloped steps or paths. If there is a desire to reinstate the end of a row of beach huts this is not infill but an extension.
- Any infill or new site that is brought forward will need planning permission with formal consultation.

13. Conclusions and proposed sites for feasibility studies

- 13.1 The community steering group conclusions are that the option appraisal process has brought forward several potential sites for wider community consultation on whether or not they should proceed to feasibility work, these are:

Site 9 Tower Hill – East – priority 5

The community steering group propose the site for feasibility as this is a potential new beach hut site.

Site 10 Tankerton Slope West – priority 1

As an existing site it could be considered for infilling gaps between existing beach huts within the boundary of existing beach huts. However, we would not propose extending the rows of beach huts or adding an extra row at the back of the site.

Site 12 Tankerton Slope East – priority 1

As an existing site it could be considered for infilling gaps between existing beach huts within the boundary of existing beach huts. However, would not propose extending the rows of beach huts or adding an extra row at the back of the site.

Site 13 Marine Crescent – priority 1 (infill) priority 2 for extension

As an existing site it could be considered for infilling gaps between existing beach huts within the boundary of existing beach huts. There is also potential for a new site between the Sailing Club and existing row of beach huts.

Site 14 Priest and Sow to Skate Park – priority 1

As an existing site (Long Rock) it could be considered for infilling gaps between existing beach huts within the boundary of existing beach huts. However, we would not propose extending the rows of beach huts or adding an extra row at the back of the site.

Site 20 Spa Esplanade – West – priority 1

As an existing site it could be considered for infilling gaps between existing beach huts within the boundary of existing beach huts. However, we would not propose extending the rows of beach huts or adding an extra row at the back of the site.

Site 21 Spa Esplanade – East – priority 1

As an existing site it could be considered for infilling gaps between existing beach huts within the boundary of existing beach huts. However, we would not propose extending the rows of beach huts or adding an extra row at the back of the site.

Site 22 Albany Drive to the Pier - summer season only – priority 3

The area previously had beach huts along the front although these were damaged winter storm and removed. Therefore propose to consider reinstating summer seasonal beach huts only.

Site 23 The Nun's Huts – priority 3

They were previously used as concrete beach huts so could consider an opportunity to restore and reopen.

Site 26 Concrete plinths at base of Downs – priority 4

Community steering group propose the site for feasibility as it is not in protected open space and is a historic venue for beach huts and is an opportunity to reinstate beach huts.

Site 27 Upper Steps of promenade at base of Downs – priority 5

Community steering group propose the site for feasibility stage as the site was originally designed for beach huts and bathing huts and is an opportunity to reinstate beach huts.

- 13.2 All of the above are subject to feedback from the public consultation and approval from Canterbury City Council Executive to proceed to feasibility study, or not.
- 13.3 If any site is eventually proposed to be delivered then planning permission will be required.

14 Next steps

- 14.1 The community steering group's draft report is being circulated to coastal community groups, resident associations and the general public for comment and public consultation.
- 14.2 A summary of feedback will be made available and the consultation may lead to amendments and a final report will go to the Canterbury City Council Executive for a formal decision.
- 14.3 If a proposed site is approved for feasibility study the community steering group will consider:
- Clarify needs
 - Numbers of beach huts on a site
 - Capital costs for each site
 - Capital funding options – external/internal funding
 - Consider disposal options whether to sell the beach huts with a tenancy or rent beach huts (weekly/monthly)
 - Management options and revenue costs for each site
 - Reconsider planning policies as specific details of sites are developed plus consider issues such as Habitat Regulations Assessment

- Statutory consultation such as Environment Agency, Kent Highways Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust
- Consider deliverability

14.4 If feasibility studies are required the aim will be to bring forward feasibility reports for consultation by the end of 2011 or early 2012.

Acknowledgements

The Community Steering Group included representatives from: Tankerton Bay Beach Hut Association, Herne Bay Beach Hut Association, Whitstable Society, Herne Bay Residents Association, and Whitstable Harbour Board officers.

Canterbury City Council officer input has included: Community Development, Outdoor Leisure, Foreshore, Planning, Legal Services, Engineers, Transport, Countryside, Town Centre Manager and Community Safety Unit.

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CONSULTATION DRAFT