

## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 11 January 2021

**Title:** Bexhill East Promenade Shelter One

**Report of:** Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Community

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Timpe

**Ward(s):** Bexhill Sackville

**Purpose of Report:** To inform Members of the restoration of Bexhill Promenade Shelter One with the support of Bexhill Heritage and to seek approval to grant a lease to Bexhill Heritage upon completion of the works.

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

### Officer

**Recommendation(s):** It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the proposals for Shelter One and the benefits of its restoration and lease to Bexhill Heritage for the community and cultural heritage of Bexhill, be noted;
- 2) the proposed disposal by lease of Shelter One be advertised on 2 consecutive weeks as required by Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 with any objections to be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet; and
- 3) subject to completion of this process, a lease be granted to Bexhill Heritage for a term of ten years at a peppercorn rent and other terms and conditions to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive.

**Reasons for Recommendations:** To support Bexhill Heritage to provide residents and visitors with a space for cultural activities and information as well as somewhere in which to rest and shelter along East Parade. To devolve this heritage asset to Bexhill Heritage by way of a lease, to include responsibility for future maintenance and repair.

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## Introduction

1. The seafront shelters are a valued and popular community asset that are well used by residents and visitors alike; they offer a unique feature and contribute significantly to the Edwardian character that defines Bexhill as a place to live, work and visit. As such, in recent years it has been a priority of successive Council administrations to ensure that the restoration of the shelters is prioritised and that they are returned to their former glory.
2. The investment will transform the shelter into a vibrant cultural hub and bandstand to be leased and operated by Bexhill Heritage.

3. In total there are four shelters on Bexhill East Parade Promenade all of which are Grade II listed and located within the conservation zone. Shelter One refers to the shelter near Channel View East and Bexhill Sailing Club. Please see Appendix A where a map of the location of all four shelters is included.
4. Shelter Two was repaired by the Council in 2019, and Shelter Three has recently been repaired with some investment from Section 106 monies being committed to undertake restoration works. Bexhill Heritage volunteers have provided a large portion of the labour and local expertise with the restoration of Shelter Three. Shelter Four is also in need of repair to prevent it dilapidating further. The costs of repairing Shelter Four are more modest and will be met from within existing budgets.
5. Bexhill Heritage propose to utilise their volunteer network and support the aspects of the restoration that need to be contracted from specialist suppliers. Once restored, Bexhill Heritage have requested to lease Shelter One from the Council. Bexhill Heritage have the ambition of developing Shelter One into a cultural and information centre and bandstand, as well as supporting its continued use as an open access space for the public in which to shelter. Details of their proposals and the benefits are attached at Appendix B.

### **Proposed Restoration**

6. Shelters One and Four need immediate repair to prevent further dilapidation.
7. Over the years various changes have been made to the structure of Shelter One and, following conservation advice, it is intended to restore aspects of the bandstand so that they are more in keeping with the original structure.
8. The shelter has already been shrouded to allow for preliminary investigative works to determine the extent of the restoration required, and an estimated cost of the works to be completed. The cost of the works that will need to be met from specialist external contractors is estimated to be £60,000 and will need to be accommodated within the overall revenue budget. A more detailed breakdown of costs can be found at Appendix C.
9. Bexhill Heritage's contribution to the restoration will be to provide labour resources, utilising its network of volunteers. The value of the labour contribution is estimated to be around 1,500 hours, equivalent to a value of £31,000 of costs that will be avoided by utilising Bexhill Heritage volunteers.
10. In 2018, the Council commissioned a structural condition report on Shelter One. The report estimated that the cost of simply repairing the shelter and its roof would be £61,000; therefore, the cost to the Council of a full restoration at £60,000 (in partnership with Bexhill Heritage) is slightly lower than the estimated cost of a simple repair at £61,000 – equivalent to the level of repair works undertaken at Shelter Two, for example.
11. It is intended to commence preparatory works during this winter with the shelter restored and open to the public during summer 2021.

## **Lease Shelter One to Bexhill Heritage**

12. Once restoration is complete, Bexhill Heritage have requested to lease Shelter One and manage it. The shelter would offer a range of cultural events and activities, whilst maintaining open access to the public for continued use as a shelter; other proposed uses for the shelter include:
  - A pop-up tourist information point;
  - A Heritage Hub;
  - A community facility for events including music, charity fundraising, educational groups and craft demonstrations.
13. If a lease is granted Bexhill Heritage propose to make a nominal charge for the bookable events and would use the revenue generated to clean, repair, and maintain the shelter in its restored condition and contribute to electricity costs. The shelter would not be operated for profit.
14. The award of a lease of Shelter One would qualify as a *disposal of public open space* and authority is therefore sought to advertise the proposed disposal in accordance with S.123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972. Any objections received will be reported to a future Cabinet. If no objections are received the Council would grant a lease for a maximum period of ten years at a peppercorn rent with full repairing obligations (except for structural timbers) on Bexhill Heritage as the tenant. Although the detailed terms are not yet determined, it is recommended that the lease clearly defines the use of the shelter and includes a rolling break clause for both parties.

## **Conclusion**

15. Shelters One and Four are in need of immediate repair to prevent their dilapidating further. Members should note that it also remains an option to also simply repair Shelter One; however, the costs of such are slightly higher than the cost of to fully restoring it in partnership with Bexhill Heritage, given the volunteer labour contribution from them. It is also a consideration that leasing the asset to Bexhill Heritage, on a full repairing lease (with the exception of structural timbers,) will avoid future maintenance and repair costs for the Council.
16. The disposal of a restored Shelter One by way of a lease to Bexhill Heritage for a term of ten years at a peppercorn rent has a range of benefits. It will enable Bexhill Heritage to work with a range of community partners to transform the shelter into a vibrant and valued community asset for the future. Further, there is financial benefit to the Council in that Bexhill Heritage will be responsible for the repair and utility costs associated with managing the shelters reducing future costs.
17. It is recommended that the final detail of the lease terms be developed by the relevant Council officers and authorised by the Chief Executive to the Council in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Management.

## **Financial Implications**

18. The financial implications of the proposals are detailed within the main body of the report.

## Legal Implications

19. The legal implications of the proposals are detailed in the main body of the report.

## Equalities and Diversity

20. The proposed works include removing the step and levelling the access to both shelters on all sides to improve access to the public and disabled users.

## Sustainability

21. The restoration of the shelters sustains the cultural heritage of Bexhill and ensures they can be enjoyed for future generations. Those aspects of the works that need to be contracted from specialist suppliers will be done so from local suppliers.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	Yes
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	Yes	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

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Appendices:	Appendix A – Location Map Appendix B – Bexhill Heritage Proposals (separate document) Appendix C – Shelter One Estimated Restoration Costs
Relevant Previous Minutes:	
Background Papers:	-
Reference Documents:	-

## Appendix A

### Shelter Locations



## Appendix C

Shelter One: estimated restoration costs:

Scaffolding	£1,100
Joinery contractor	£22,500
Roof works	£14,000
Electrical	£1,800
Landscape DDA compliance	£6,000
Paint and consumables	£2,500
Glazing	£3,500
Ironmongery	£500
Contingency 15%	£7,785
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£59,185</b>

Note: Bexhill Heritage estimate volunteers will contribute 1,575 hrs to the restoration project, which, based on a consultant architects estimated contractor costs provided to RDC in 2018, would be equivalent in value to £31,250 in savings.