

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	09 July 2019
Subject:	Huttoft Boat Shed Visitor Centre and Cafe

Summary:

Recently completed coastal projects, the new Gibraltar Point Visitor Centre at Skegness and the North Sea Observatory at Chapel St Leonards, have shown that if the facilities are good enough you can attract visitors to the Lincolnshire Coast at any time of the year. This project will look at adding another new quality tourist facility in the heart of the Coastal Country Park, close to the beach at Huttoft, just South of Sutton on Sea.

The project will be funded by Lincolnshire County Council and the GL LEP.

Subject to receiving planning permission this Autumn the project will start on site early in 2020 and be finished and open to the public in June 2020.

The building will replace an existing redundant boat shed, owned by Lincolnshire County Council. Currently there is no electricity on the site, so the scheme will include a new connection between the site and the nearest mains electricity on the main road.

The new building will contain a high quality cafe, a rooftop viewing deck with a glass balustrade and an external ground level deck for hosting larger pop-up food and other events. The building will have floor to ceiling windows facing inland and North to Sutton on Sea. Given its isolated location, these windows will be protected with shutters when the building is not open.

The new building will be let to a commercial enterprise, at a commercial rent. They will be responsible for the maintenance of the building and the neighbouring public toilets, which will be refurbished as part of the project.

Actions Required:

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to:

- 1) Consider and comment on the proposals for the Huttoft Boat Shed Visitor Centre and Cafe, and;
- 2) Endorse that the Executive Councillor for Economy and Place approves the required development for the project in line with the project delivery timetable.

1. Background

Evidence for need

In 2016 the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) identified major challenges in progressing initiatives to grow coastal nature tourism. There is a perception of the coast being a series of resorts catering for the mass market. There is also a lack of infrastructure for tourism, particularly good quality accommodation and eating places compared to competitors such as North Norfolk

Opportunity

The GLNP estimated the current value of nature based tourism and leisure activity to GL could be as much as £325 million, of which £51 million is associated with holidays and day trips where engaging with wildlife is the primary purpose.

The GLNP identified a need to create flagships for further development work to act as 'clusters' to create additional critical mass in terms of marketing the destination.

This project at Huttoft looks at adding a new coastal 'flagship'. It will build on the success of other successful projects recently completed by LCC, the new Gibraltar Point visitor centre and the North Sea Observatory at Chapel St Leonards. These schemes have received a number of design awards, have improved the food and information offer on the coast, attract over 150,000 visitors a year, and have raised the bar in what visitor expect when they visit the coast.

It will be in a prime position bring together a wide range of existing coastal activities and promote new ones. Including :- organised walks and beach/sea safaris; sea dipping; whale, seal and dolphin watching events; beach cleaning & events raising the awareness of plastic pollution; promoting the new National Coastal Footpath. It will also host satellite art exhibitions and activities in conjunction with the North Sea Observatory Gallery.

Location

Huttoft lies within the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park. A narrow road connects the main coast road to the car park on Huttoft Terrace. The Terrace is popular with visitors who can park and enjoy an uninterrupted view of the sea.

Next to the dunes is a building, owned by LCC, originally used by a boat club to house a tractor. The club disbanded some years ago and the building is no longer used.

LCC have been looking at alternative uses for the site. Given the need for additional tourist facilities and the success of other coastal projects it is proposed to replace it with a building incorporating a café, visitor facilities and public toilets.

Building design

The building is designed to be no larger than the footprint of the existing building (a requirement of the Environment Agency). So to maximise its potential it will have a rooftop viewing deck and a second ground level timber deck on the landward side. The internal layout has been designed to reflect lessons learnt from other recently completed projects. So room for tables and chairs will be maximised and there will be a foyer to protect customers from the elements when the doors are in operation. To maximise the space inside the building the project will include the refurbishment of the existing public toilets next door (currently owned by East Lindsey District Council) and then incorporating these within the project.

There will be floor to ceiling windows facing West (to the Wolds) and North (to Sutton on Sea). These will be protected by shutters when the building is not open.

The existing building is not connected to mains electricity. So the project includes linking the building to the nearest electric supply, 1000m away on the main road.

Local issues

Sand removal – Most issues caused by sand blowing from the beach effect the parking terrace not the area around the proposed café and the removal of sand from the parking terrace will be unaffected by this project.

Terrace car parking charging – the project does not prevent any future change to charging for visitors using the terrace. The new electric supply will also future proof the site should parking meters etc. need to be installed in the future.

Anti-social behaviour on the terrace – during the consultation on the project the parish council and local members have said that anti-social behaviour on the terrace has decreased in recent years. But having a new building in this location should help to deter anti-social behaviour in the area.

Project delivery and timetable

The project will be delivered by LCC. The delivery timeline is :-

Detailed design	June to mid September 2019
Planning process	application submitted in August for decision Nov. 2019
Procurement process	mid September to mid October 2019
Contract awarded	mid November 2019
Construction on site	early January to mid June 2020
Open to the public	mid June 2020

Project costs and funding

Revenue costs

£8,000	Feasibility
£2,000	Site surveys
£10,000	Total

Revenue funding

£4,000	Bid to Greater Lincolnshire LEP feasibility funding
£6,000	Lincolnshire County Council
£10,000	Total

Capital costs

£5,000	Remove existing boat shed
£3,000	Refurbish existing toilet block
£67,000	Connect to nearest mains electric supply (1000m) and other services
£325,000	Main build including sub structure, piling, external decking etc
£3,000	Bin store
£60,000	Professional and design fees
£17,000	Additional items, furniture (internal/external), interpretation, signage.
£480,000	Total

Capital funding

£240,000	Greater Lincolnshire LEP (awarded in May 2019)
£240,000	Lincolnshire County Council (Coastal Country Park budget)
£480,000	Total

Future ownership and maintenance

The building will remain in LCC's ownership. It will be run by a commercial operator, creating new jobs and a new SME. The tenant will be charged a commercial rent and be expected to maintain the building and public toilets.

This new business will be encouraged to provide seasonal food, sourced locally. They will also employ permanent, part-time, seasonal and voluntary staff from the local area and support numerous other smaller local companies.

2. Conclusion

Other coastal projects recently completed show that if the facilities are good enough, you can attract people to visit the Lincolnshire Coast any time of the year. They have helped overcome negative perceptions of the Lincolnshire Coast and can help other businesses see the potential of investing on the coast.

The new Huttoft Boat Shed Cafe builds on the progress already made towards the sort of critical mass needed to make a significant impact.

3. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with East Lindsey District Council, Huttoft Parish Council, the Environment Agency and the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Location plan
Appendix B	Site plan
Appendix C	Building designs and elevations

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Peter Fender, who can be contacted on 01522 550604 or peter.fender@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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