

# Beach Hut and Chalet Review Report

## Introduction

In 2018 an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was set up in order to review the Council's beach hut and chalet service. The review included the weekly and annual lets, with a full review of all processes, fees and charges in order to identify operational improvements and highlight options for future efficiencies and service enhancements.

## Recommendations

A summary of the major recommendations are:

- Move to online booking and charge collection of weekly lets
- Move the annual lets from 1 to 5 year licences
- Increase prices of the annual lets based on the review findings

Included within the above recommendations are a number of smaller actions including the production of a marketing plan, review of key change systems, and training of staff to implement. All of which have been successfully completed.

Another key element highlighted is a continued maintenance regime in order to maintain the standards of the service. A full condition survey was undertaken to address this.

## Progress

The online booking system has now been designed and implemented. The system has been in place since October 2018. There has been some excellent feedback received from our customers, complimenting the simplicity of the system. The new system has produced some improvements and efficiencies to the service significantly reducing the amount of customers' queries, as previously all bookings were completed manually. A marketing plan was completed and this have been implemented in order to promote the online booking system.

The licences have now been changed to a 5 year lease for all beach huts and chalets. This process has been advised and supported by the Council's legal and assets teams.

The new fees and charges have also been implemented together with the new leases. Both the increased prices and the 5 year lease have caused a greater number of licence holders to not renew. However, given that we are still holding significant waiting lists (e.g. up to nine years in Sheringham), it has not caused an issue for the service or occupancy of the huts and chalet sites.

## Financial Position

The figures below represent the financial position following the implementation of the recommendations:

	2019	2018
Annual Lets	£139,511.02	£111,670.13
Weekly Lets	£28,690.75	£31,463.83
Total	£168,201.77	£143,133.96

There is a good increase to the income of the annual lets due to the fee increases. The weekly let bookings are slightly down. Whilst this is disappointing there are good reasons that may

explain this position. Some of the customers struggle with booking online. Whilst the new system is simple, a number of our customers are not yet fully conversant with online activity. Also, summer 2019 weather was not as good as 2018. We have anecdotal evidence (based on beach user and car park figures) that there have been fewer visitors to the district this season compared to 2019 and so this would impact on the weekly let bookings.

### **Future Work**

We will now review the online booking marketing plan, in order to bring in new ideas and strategies to increase bookings for next year.

The condition surveys have been analysed and a three year work programme has been written. This work will commence in the spring for those most urgent improvement that are required.

Monitoring of the service will continue in order to ensure that the service operates as successfully as possible.