



Agenda

Meeting: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **8 November 2022**
Time: **7.00 pm**
Place: **Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone**

To: **All members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The committee will consider the matters, listed below, at the date, time and place shown above. The meeting will be open to the press and public.

Members of the committee, who wish to have information on any matter arising on the agenda, which is not fully covered in these papers, are requested to give notice, prior to the meeting, to the Chairman or appropriate officer.

This meeting will be webcast live to the council's website at <https://folkestone-hythe.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. Although unlikely, no guarantee can be made that Members of the public in attendance will not appear in the webcast footage. It is therefore recommended that anyone with an objection to being filmed does not enter the council chamber.

Please note there are 37 seats available for members of the public, which will be reserved for those speaking or participating at the meeting. The remaining available seats will be given on a first come, first served basis.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest (Pages 3 - 4)**

Members of the committee should declare any interests which fall under the following categories:

- a) disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI);
- b) other significant interests (OSI);
- c) voluntary announcements of other interests.

Queries about the agenda? Need a different format?

Contact James Clapson – Tel: 01303 583764

Email: committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk or download from our website: www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

3. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)**

To consider and approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022.

4. **Minutes of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub Committee (Pages 11 - 14)**

To consider and approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022.

5. **Otterpool Park LLP Business Plan 2023-24**

A presentation on the strategic business plan for Otterpool Park Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) will be provided by the LLP Managing Director. The presentation will provide commentary on progress achieved to date and set out the proposed priorities, key milestones and finances for the LLP for 2023-24. The presentation will provide the opportunity for the Committee to feedback ahead of Cabinet considering the draft updated Business Plan in January 2023.

6. **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Finance team await details of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Medium Term Fiscal Plan, originally due on 31 October 2022. The Plan will be used to inform a presentation that will cover the following areas:

- The Budget setting process for 2023/24
- Update on the financial climate for Local Government
- General Fund/Medium Term Financial Strategy/Housing Revenue Account/Reserves financial overview
- Scrutiny role for the Budget

7. **Cost of Living Summit (Pages 15 - 30)**

On 6 September this Committee agreed the arrangements for holding a cost of living summit. In agreeing the proposed arrangements, the Committee also asked for a report summarising the presentations, discussions and actions arising from the summit to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee. This report provides feedback on the summit held on 20 September 2022 and updates on the actions that have been taken or are underway following the summit.

8. **Closure of Footpath South of Seaview Bridge Petition (Pages 31 - 42)**

Consideration of a petition regarding the closure of the footpath South of Seaview Bridge.

Declarations of Interest

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a Member has a new or registered DPI in a matter under consideration they must disclose that they have an interest and, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed in advance that the DPI is a 'Sensitive Interest', explain the nature of that interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a DPI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation permitting them to do so. If during the consideration of any item a Member becomes aware that they have a DPI in the matter they should declare the interest immediately and, subject to any dispensations, withdraw from the meeting.

Other Significant Interest (OSI)

Where a Member is declaring an OSI they must also disclose the interest and explain the nature of the interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a OSI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation to do so or the meeting is one at which members of the public are permitted to speak for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter. In the latter case, the Member may only participate on the same basis as a member of the public and cannot participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter and must withdraw from the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)

Where a Member does not have either a DPI or OSI but is of the opinion that for transparency reasons alone s/he should make an announcement in respect of a matter under consideration, they can make a VAOI. A Member declaring a VAOI may still remain at the meeting and vote on the matter under consideration.

Note to the Code:

Situations in which a Member may wish to make a VAOI include membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items; where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person; or where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position. It should be emphasised that an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI.

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Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Held at: | Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone |
| Date | Tuesday, 6 September 2022 |
| Present | Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Peter Gane, Rebecca Shoob (Vice-Chair, in the Chair) and John Wing. |
| Apologies for Absence | Councillor Michelle Keutenius, Councillor Connor McConville, Councillor Terence Mullard and Councillor Patricia Rolfe. |
| Officers Present: | Simon Baxter (Chief Officer - Development), Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Rebecca Chittock (Planning Policy Specialist), James Clapson (Case Officer (Committee)), Ewan Green (Director of Place), Llywelyn Lloyd (Chief Planning Officer), Susan Priest (Chief Executive), Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist) and David Whittington (Strategy & Policy Senior Specialist). |
| Others Present: | Councillor Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee. |

1. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Shoob declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as she is a Director of Otterpool Park LLP. During consideration of the Otterpool Park Stewardship item, Councillor Shoob moved to the public gallery and did not take part in discussions or voting on the item.

Proposed by Councillor Shoob,
Seconded by Councillor Wing; and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Gane take the Chair during the consideration of the Otterpool Park Stewardship item in Councillor Shoob's absence.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 31 May 2022 and 13 July 2022 were agreed, submitted and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Minutes of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were agreed, submitted and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Change of Membership - Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub Committee**

Proposed by Councillor Shoob,
Seconded by Councillor Gane; and

RESOLVED:

1. **That the following appointments be made to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub Committee:**

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Conservative 2 Seats | Cllr Rolfe + 1 Vacancy |
| Green 1 Seat | Cllr Shoob |
| Labour 1 Seat | Cllr McConville |
| Liberal Democrat 1 Seat | Cllr Gane |

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

5. **Cost of living summit**

On 27 July 2022, Full Council considered a motion with various actions relating to the cost of living, this included holding a Cost of Living Summit. Council resolved to examine these matters as part of a future Scrutiny programme. The report set out the proposed arrangements for a Cost of Living Summit.

Councillor Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, provided a brief introduction to the report noting that 60 organisations had been invited. She also highlighted that the Household Support Fund was currently available, but only until 30 September 2022.

Proposed by Councillor Gane,
Seconded by Councillor Wing; and

RESOLVED:

1. **That report OS/22/03 be received and noted.**
2. **That the proposed arrangements for the summit be approved.**

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

6. **Ship Street - Development of the Design Brief**

Mr Blaszkowicz, provided the Committee with a presentation on the emerging strategy to provide housing led regeneration at the former Gas Works site in Ship Street, Folkestone. The presentation included a timetable, an indication of proposed procurement routes and access to government funding to support the design development and remediation of the site. The presentation slides have been attached to the minutes.

During consideration of the item, the following points were noted in response to the presentation, and to questions answered by Mr Blaszkowicz and Mr Baxter:

- LHA stood for Local Housing Allowance. Rent rates at all of the Council's new build homes were set at the LHA level. If someone received full benefits, their benefit payments would fully cover the cost of their rent.
- Consideration would be given to the provision of a community hub on site.
- The Council would assess its options next year, following completion of the design phase. The Council could bring in a partner, continue to manage the project on its own, or pass the project to another organisation.
- The site was envisaged to have an urban form of typology. A designer would be appointed in the next few months, they would need to balance housing density and financial viability in order to make the best use of the site.
- The aspirations would be included in the design brief, the buildings needed to be future proofed in terms of energy efficiency and quality.

Proposed by Councillor Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Gane

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

7. Otterpool Park Stewardship

Councillor Shoob handed Chairmanship to Councillor Gane and moved to the public gallery during the consideration of this item.

Mr Green gave a presentation to the Committee detailing the work undertaken on the emerging strategy for stewardship at Otterpool Park. The presentation built upon the key themes and issues previously considered in relation to the overall strategic approach, and the development of a bespoke stewardship vehicle. The presentation slides have been attached to the minutes.

During consideration of the item, the following comments were noted:

- That the approach being recommended had developed from reviews of other stewardship models along with consideration of specialist advice.

- It was recommended that a stewardship LLP would be the best approach.
- There would be community involvement from the outset.
- A key principle was that the Council would have strategic control at the start, then move to a more community led approach as Otterpool Park develops.
- A long term, sustainable business plan would be developed for the new stewardship vehicle.

Proposed by Councillor Gane
Seconded by Councillor Carey

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update

(Voting: For 3; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

8. Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Update

Councillor Shoob returned to the meeting and resumed chairmanship.

Ms Chittock introduced the Cabinet report (C/22/23). It provided an update of the work carried out to update the Statement of Community Involvement. She asked the Committee for their comments and thoughts.

During consideration of the item, the following points were noted in response to the report and questions answered by Ms Chittock and Mr Lloyd.

- The document set out the minimum standards that could be expected from the council. In reality the council exceeded these standards whenever the requirement arose.
- It was difficult for the public to engage in the planning process, so it was good to involve the Town and Parish Councils, who could help to support residents. District Councillors also had a role in supporting residents.
- It was suggested that the applicant could be made responsible for removing old notices once they were no longer required. Mr Llyod offered to see if that would be possible.
- The updates were good.
- There should be a list of stakeholders who were consulted by default.
- How could newly formed groups and residents be brought on board prior to the start of the next Local Plan review. This would achieve public engagement at an early stage. The Folkestone Place Plan was a good example of how consultation and engagement could work.

Proposed by Councillor Gane,
Seconded by Councillor Carey; and

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

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Minutes

Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Held at: | Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone |
| Date | Tuesday, 11 October 2022 |
| Present | Councillors Peter Gane, Connor McConville (Chairman), Patricia Rolfe and Rebecca Shoob. |
| Officers Present: | James Clapson (Case Officer (Committee)), Gavin Edwards (Performance and Improvement Specialist), Leanne Knight (Finance Specialist), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services) and Lee Walker (Capital and Treasury Senior Specialist). |

1. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Rolfe and Councillor McConville both declared a DPI as they are directors of Oportunitas Ltd. A dispensation has been applied.

Councillor Shoob declared a DPI as she is a director of Otterpool Park LLP.

All members remained in the meeting, taking part in discussions and voting on all items.

2. **Quarter 1 Performance Report 2022/23**

Mr Edwards introduced the report that provided an update on the Council's performance for the first quarter of the year, from 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022. The report enables the Council to assess progress against the approved key performance indicators (KPI) arising from the Council's new Corporate Action Plan. The report would go on to be considered at the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 20 October 2022.

During consideration of the item, the following points were as noted:

- Councillor Gane requested an update regarding some incidents of graffiti that he had previously reported within his ward. Mr Edwards would

follow up the cases with Area Officer team and arrange for a response to be provided to the committee. Mr Edwards also confirmed the Council had removed 683 incidents of graffiti during the quarter.

- Councillor Rolfe noted that 98.23% of streets surveyed were clear of litter, but the report did not specify the location or number of streets surveyed. Mr Edwards confirmed that two officers had inspected 566 different locations for litter during the period. He would find out which locations were inspected and advise the committee.
- It would be difficult to have a meaningful KPI monitoring the fiscal position of the Council as it would be an oversimplification of the situation. Officers were currently working on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, this would look at the Council's funding position and the wider economic picture.
- It was suggested that in future, where percentages were detailed in the report, the actual number would also be shown as this would help to give the percentage more context.
- Percentage of food premises broadly compliant: The Environmental Health team inspected 122 food premises during the quarter.
- Percentage of successful prosecutions: There had been two successful enforcement prosecutions and no unsuccessful prosecutions during the period. The number of unsuccessful prosecutions would be specified in future reports..
- Councillor Shoob requested further information about plans to increase household recycling levels, including any trends in the overall amount of waste collected. Mr Edwards confirmed that he would follow this up with the Waste Services manager and provide a response to the committee.
- Councillor Shoob raised a question about the current number of people homeless and living on the street. Mr Edwards confirmed that the Housing team were keeping the number under review and would follow this up with the Housing team in order for a response to be provided to the committee on the latest numbers.
- The KPI target for the determination of planning applications was set at 60%. This appeared to be a very low target, however it was noted that this KPI target was set by the Government, not the Council.
- Councillor McConville asked for further information about any upcoming council housing new build projects, Mr Edwards confirmed that the Council was to acquire 15 new council homes on the former Royal Victoria Hospital site by the end of the year, and there were 14 homes under development in Shepway Close, Folkestone that were due for completion by September 2023. In addition to the homes on the Highview site, the Council also had homes due to be delivered on sites at Biggins Wood and Ship Street in the future.
- Councillor Rolfe asked how many council houses had been bought through the Right to Buy scheme. She wanted to see the effect this had on the overall number of houses available. However, it was noted that the number of homes purchased through the scheme was not within the

Council's control. Mr Edwards confirmed he would raise this question with Housing Strategy lead and arrange for a response to be provided to the committee.

- Councillor McConville asked how play areas were selected for improvement. It was noted that the Council's adopted Play Area Strategy was used to determine which play areas would receive improvement work.

Proposed by Councillor Gane,

Seconded by Councillor McConville; and

RESOLVED:

1. To receive and note report C/22/45
2. To note the performance information for Quarter 1 2022-23 in Appendix 1.
3. To note the ongoing review work being undertaken into the call levels being answered by Customer Services set out in section 3.1
4. To recommend that Cabinet approve the inclusion of the additional KPIs set out in section 4.1

(Voting figures: 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

3. General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring - 2nd Quarter 2022/23

Ms Knight introduced the report that provided a projection of the end of year financial position for the General Fund revenue budget, based on expenditure to 31 August 2022.

During consideration of the item, the following points were noted:

- The Council had experienced a slight rise in bad debt, this was expected to rise further as the rise in the cost of living could lead to more residents struggling to pay their bills.
- It would be useful if the report showed what directorate each service fell under.
- The reduction forecast for Interest and Investment Income was mainly due to a delay in interest payments that were due to be received from Oportunitas.
- Non-Service Related Government Grants were mainly COVID-19 grants that the Council had received. The report assumed these grants will be fully utilised, however if that was not the case the associated expenditure would also reduce; therefore it would have no impact upon the bottom line of the forecast.

The Sub-Committee Members noted the report.

(Voting figures: 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

4. General Fund Capital Programme Budget Monitoring 2022/23

Mr Walker introduced the report that provided an initial projection of the current financial position for the General Fund capital programme profiled for 2022/23. It was based on expenditure up to 31 August 2022, and identified variances compared against the latest approved budget.

During consideration of the item, the following points were noted:

- Interest rate rises would have an impact on the Council. The Treasury Management Monitoring report, due to be considered by Cabinet on 20 October 2022, detailed the Council's current borrowing position, and work was underway to prepare the Medium Term Financial Strategy that would look at the future borrowing position. This report was expected to be considered by Cabinet in November.
- Funding for the Princes Parade Leisure Centre had been re-profiled, work would be undertaken to establish how this will impact on the project.
- The reduction in capital grants was linked to the re-profiling of capital expenditure. Mr Walker offered to get back to Councillor McConville with more information about the grants.

The Sub-Committee Members noted the report.
(Voting figures: 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

5. Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Quarter 2

Mr Walker presented the report that provided a projection of the end of year financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue expenditure and the HRA capital programme. This was based upon the net expenditure up to 31 August 2022. He noted a typographical error in paragraph 2.2 where the word *increase* should be replaced with the word *reduction*.

During consideration of the item, the following points were noted:

- The projected reduction in income was largely due to empty garages.
- Mr Walker offered to arrange for Councillor McConville to receive further information about the delay in works to replace windows, doors and the reroofing works.

The Sub-Committee Members noted the report.
(Voting figures: 4 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

This Report will be made
public on 31 October 2022

Report Number **OS/22/07**

To: Overview and Scrutiny
Date: 8 November 2022
Status: Non-Key Decision
Head of Service: Charlotte Spendley, Director – Corporate Services
Cabinet Member: Councillor Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities
SUBJECT: Cost of Living Summit

SUMMARY:

On 6 September this Committee agreed the arrangements for holding a cost of living summit. In agreeing the proposed arrangements, the Committee also asked for a report summarising the presentations, discussions and actions arising from the summit to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee. This report provides feedback on the summit held on 20 September 2022 and updates on the actions that have been taken or are underway following the summit.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Overview and Scrutiny is asked to:

1. To receive and note report OS/22/07
2. To endorse the cost of living leaflet and the ongoing activity following the summit.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 To ensure the summit was developed in line with Member's expectations, informal discussions were held with Councillor Keutenius (as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and Councillor Hollingsbee (as Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Communities, Lifeline, Area Officers & Street Homeless). These discussions helped officers produce the outline for the summit set out below.

- a) Objective – to ensure that the council is working effectively in partnership with local organisations and the voluntary sector to support residents in need with food, warmth and energy during the coming winter months.
- b) Format – the format of a formal council meeting may inhibit debate and be uncomfortable for some attendees. Therefore, it was proposed to have an informal meeting from which a report could be produced back to a subsequent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- c) Agenda – to provide structure and clarity over the areas of debate an agenda was produced but there were no formal reports.
- d) Speakers – following a welcome and introduction by Councillor Keutenius, it was proposed to have four speakers and invitations were issued accordingly. A senior officer from the Revenues and Benefits Service, and representatives from the Rainbow Centre, the Community Hubs and the Citizens Advice Bureau in turn gave presentations to the meeting. Each speaker was asked to set out how their organisation is responding to the cost of living crisis and the support they are offering to residents. There was time for questions after each speaker and, after the final speaker, all the speakers participated in a panel session with questions from the audience. When the panel session concluded, colleagues were encouraged to stay and network with their peers.
- e) Outputs – it was proposed to send a pro-forma to all attendees asking them to provide full contact details and information about the services they provide and the locations they serve. This was intended to assist in the compilation of a comprehensive register that could be used by residents to access help and by organisations to make cross-referrals.

1.2 Given the short period of time available, and the difficulty in aligning the diaries of many busy partners, it was considered expedient to make use of a meeting with voluntary sector partners that was already scheduled for 20 September. This is a quarterly remote meeting that is organised by the Revenues and Benefits Service to discuss welfare issues with colleagues and partners.

1.3 Council (27 July, minute 22) asked for all voluntary organisations assisting residents to be invited and so leading councillors and colleagues were consulted to identify organisations and obtain contact details. More than 100 people were invited from 60 different organisations.

- 1.4 The summit was well attended and it has been available to view as a webcast, using the link below, for those that were unable to participate on the day –

[Cost of Living Summit - Tuesday, 20th September 2022 at 2:00pm - Folkestone & Hythe webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)

2. THE SUMMIT

- 2.1 The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Keutenius, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. She spoke of her aspiration that organisations could work together in partnership to support any residents in need of help.
- 2.2 Councillor Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, highlighted some of the important work going on in the District, and hoped the Summit would encourage more partnership working and identify any gaps in the provision that could be bridged.
- 2.3 Andrew Hatcher, Revenues and Benefits Lead Specialist - Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC), provided a presentation that detailed the services and support offered by the Council.

Following the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The Council was looking for additional funding streams to enable it to provide more support for those struggling.
 - There was support available for people not on benefits.
 - Kent County Council's Refer Kent programme was looking for organisations to add to the system.
 - Partners should let FHDC's Welfare team know if they had clients in urgent need of support.
 - The Welfare team would ask customers for permission to share their details with partners, such as Disability Assist.
- 2.4 Wendy Lehnert, Food Services Manager - The Rainbow Centre, provided a presentation about the work of the Centre and advised of a new Hythe Pantry service that would soon be operational.

After the presentation, the following points were noted:

- Although more food donations had been received than in previous years, the demand for the service had also increased, so the need for donations remained high.
- Councillors could make food bank donations at the Council when they attend Council meetings.

- 2.5 Jon Wilson, Chief Executive - Romney Marsh Community Hub, gave a presentation looking back at how the hub had responded to the challenges of the Covid pandemic, then looking forward to how the hub would be supporting people during the cost of living crisis, this included the provision of warm spaces, where people could come during the day to escape the cold.
- 2.6 Sue Day, District Manager, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), provided a presentation that detailed the types of support the CAB had been offering. She believed that the cost of living rises had already led to an increase in the number of threats of suicide.
- 2.7 Following the presentations, the comments and actions below were noted during the general discussion:
- The Rotary Club asked organisations to get in touch with them so they could offer their support.
 - The Council and Councillors needed to highlight to Government the severity of the challenges faced at a local level.
 - Was there any support for parents paying child support who may find it harder to afford payments as other costs go up?
 - Were there any other spaces that could be offered as warm spaces for people? Churches were co-ordinating their efforts to provide warm church spaces. A document detailing the location and opening times of warm spaces should be produced.
 - There was a lot already happening, and this needed to be advertised to the public.
 - Could Refer Kent provide a resource that would enable organisations to share their contact details and information at a ward level? This would enable organisations to see what support was locally available to people.
 - Small and medium enterprises needed more support to help ensure they stayed in business.
 - How did small organisations link into these networks to ensure a full picture of support was available?
 - Could the Council give funds to some organisations to offer clothes washing and drying facilities? This would help to reduce fuel costs in homes.
 - Meetings with key partners could be set up in the three areas of the district, to specifically focus on the needs of that area.
 - The district newsletter should be used to advise of the support and services available within the district.
 - Social Enterprise Kent had a phone line people could call; they could help to sign post people to support services.
 - Social Enterprise Kent could assist with employability support.
 - The Council's communications team were working on a digital and non-digital campaign to raise awareness about the cost of living and support.

3. ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE SUMMIT

- 3.1 Following the summit a comprehensive leaflet has been produced detailing help available and how to access that help. The Leaflet will be distributed via libraries, partner organisations and the customer access point, see Appendix 1 for a copy. Social Enterprise Kent (SEK) have also produced a booklet covering all of East Kent, which includes a section on support for residents of this district. This document will be widely available through their networks and SEK have asked the Council to share any updated information eg District Food Network (DFN) activity. This means more information will be available to the community beyond our own leaflet and SEK intend to update their booklet regularly. In addition to this, content from the leaflet is being included in the Council newspaper Your District Today. The newspaper is distributed to all residential properties in the district and the Communications Team are also exploring other ways of disseminating the information.
- 3.2 One of the initial objectives of the summit was to gather information that could be used to construct a register of organisations and their activities. However, it has become clear that developing such a register would be very time consuming and would be duplicating an existing very thorough resource provided by Kent County Council (KCC). Therefore, we will be making use of KCC's new initiative - Refer Kent that enables better cross-referrals and signposting and support for residents.
- 3.3 The Council will build on the summit through continued engagement with the community Hubs, the DFN and other community organisations across the district, including the faith sector. Already churches and community groups, including the Nepalese Community Centre, are developing plans for warm spaces. We will work with these organisations to provide additional support as there is potential to use the warm spaces for drop in and advice to give residents more information on support available to them, from foodbanks to welfare support, as well as support in filling in forms.
- 3.4 A small amount of funding (from an un-allocated Health & Wellbeing budget) is being used to support the local warm spaces with small items such as hot water bottles, blankets and flasks. This will link in the future to the UKSPF work but for the immediate situation a small contribution of between £100-£500 will be given to those organisations running warm spaces until the funding is depleted for this financial year. The church sector has a platform where warm spaces can register and further work is being carried out to support this initiative. Working together with SEK, the Council will seek to encourage a good spread of warm spaces across the district and that they are available on different days.
- 3.5 On 12th November a 'Keeping well in the Winter' event is taking place at FOLCA and this is being led by the NHS. The summit was helpful in enabling the support this event needs to be put in place. Whilst health teams will concentrate on vaccinations (flu/covid, screening, healthy weight etc), organisations are being contacted to get involved in a market place. Residents can then directly hear from community hubs, welfare teams and the DFN for example on eating well for less and food bank/ pantry advice.

3.6 OSC is asked to note the content of this report and the ongoing activity that has resulted following the cost of living summit.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 A summary of the perceived risks follows:

| Perceived risk | Seriousness | Likelihood | Preventative action |
|--|-------------|------------|--|
| Lack of engagement from the voluntary sector | 4 | 1 | Ongoing dialogue and support to nurture effective relationships. |
| | | | |

5. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NM)

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

5.2 Finance Officer's Comments (RH)

The various contributions being arranged for warm spaces, leaflet printing and the publishing of Your District Today are funded by the existing budgets.

5.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)

There are no negative equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report. The comprehensive leaflet sets out the help available to residents and the ways in which they can access this help and information. The distribution of this leaflet will be channelled at key points within local communities across the district – Libraries, partner organisations as well as the Customer Access Point. Support measures being made available will also be reflected in the Council's own 'Your District Today' publication posted out to households. In addition, further online methods for distributing this information should be considered to complement the existing channels reflected in this report to ensure the widest possible accessibility and awareness of the help and support being made available.

5.4 Climate Change Implications (OF)

The climate implications arising from this report should be positive.

Social and economic benefits – the actions arising from the report will result in positive social and economic impacts. For example, warm homes will reduce energy use for many and detailing the help available and how to access the help can have positive impacts on the wellbeing of participants.

6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting

Jyotsna Leney – Health, Wellbeing & Partnerships Senior Specialist
Telephone: 01303 853460
Email: Jyotsna.leney@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Bob Palmer – Interim Assistant Director, Corporate Services
Telephone: 07933 172374
Email: robert.palmer@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Help with Cost of Living Leaflet

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Cost of living

A guide to schemes that could help you



Cost of living support

Depending on your circumstances you may be able to get support to help with everyday costs. If you are struggling to meet the rising costs of living some of the advice detailed in this leaflet may be right for you.

Cost of living support from Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Folkestone & Hythe District Council runs a number of schemes to help residents who are finding the rising cost of living challenging. The quickest and easiest way to find out about these options is via folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

Residents without digital access can use the council's Customer Access Point in the Civic Centre to access the council website.

➤ Help with benefits

Benefits and Money Advice

We help provide confidential advice regarding your money, welfare, and benefits.

🔍 folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/help-and-support-with-your-finances

Benefits Calculator for Residents of Folkestone & Hythe District

Our online calculator is the easiest way to find out what benefits you are eligible for. Just enter up-to-date information to find out what you can claim and how to go about this.

Visit

🔍 folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/housing-benefit/how-it-works/how-to-claim

Click 'What help can I get?'



Independent Benefits Calculator

Or you could use an independent benefits calculator instead to help find out what benefits you could get and how to claim them.



🔍 entitledto.co.uk

Help with Housing

People struggling to pay council tax or rent should contact us as soon as possible to discuss payment options or see if they are eligible for discounts.

 **Please note we cannot help with mortgage payments. For support with paying your mortgage please contact your provider.**

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payment can provide extra money to help residents in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit with housing costs including:

- Rent deposits
- Rent in advance
- Moving costs
- Rent arrears
- A shortfall between housing benefit and rent or housing costs included in Universal Credit and rent

 folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/housing-benefit/discretionary-housing-benefit

Financial Support Payments

A Financial Support Payment is designed to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are still struggling to make payments.

This is to provide further assistance where an applicant is in receipt of Council Tax Reduction but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council Tax liability.

 folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/council-tax/financial-support-payment-scheme

Home Safe loan

A loan of up to £20,000 is available for eliminating hazards in the home. This scheme is for vulnerable homeowners who are in receipt of benefits and have significant hazards in the home which may cause harm. These loans are interest free and repayable upon the sale of the property.

 private.sectorhousing@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Winter Warmth repayable grant

Up to £7,000 is available for installation of heating and/or insulation. This support is available to homeowners who are 65 years and over, in receipt of benefits and/or suffering from a chronic illness which is exacerbated by the cold. These grants are repayable on a 10-year condition if the property is sold or changes ownership.

 private.sectorhousing@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Support from local organisations

Local organisations in the Folkestone & Hythe District provide help ranging from advice, food provision and wellbeing support.

➤ Community Hubs

The three community hubs in Folkestone and Hythe provide a wide range of support, including food:

Folkestone Community Hub

Operates from Age UK Folkestone, 65 Shaftesbury Road, Folkestone, CT19 4NS.

Open 9am – 4pm, Monday – Friday.

✉ communitysupport@ageukskc.org.uk

☎ 01303 316186

Hythe Community Hub

Operates from Age UK Hythe & Lyminge, Sanford House, Stade Street, Hythe, CT21 6BD.

Open 9am – 3.45pm, Monday – Friday, and 10am – 2pm Saturday and Sunday (phone line only).

✉ sm@ageukhl.org.uk

☎ 01303 269602

Romney Marsh Community Hub

Operates from Rolfe Lane, New Romney, TN28 8JR.

Open Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm.

✉ hello@rmch.org.uk

☎ 01797 363888

Shepway Foodbank

Shepway Foodbank takes referrals from a variety of organisations to help people with low incomes, delayed benefits, or facing food poverty. Clients can also call the 'Help through Hardship' freephone number on 0808 2082138 to obtain a referral voucher or - if this is not possible - they can call the foodbank on 07913 573403.


The foodbank is based at three locations, and currently delivers parcels on the following days: Lydd (Fridays), New Romney (Tuesdays), Folkestone (Tuesdays and Fridays).

The Rainbow Centre (69 Sandgate Road, Folkestone, CT20 2AF) also holds emergency food parcels, which can be collected from the centre during opening hours (10am – 1pm, Monday – Friday).

The Rainbow Centre also runs Hythe Pantry. This scheme charges £5 for a weekly visit (one visit per household) which entitles members to food worth £20 - £25. To see how to become a member and find out opening times, go to yourlocalpantry.co.uk.

Salvation Army

Hythe Salvation Army Foodbank is open on Wednesdays from 10am - noon at the Salvation Army Hall, Hythe CT21 6EG.

 **01303 268792**

Community Fridge

The Folkestone Community Fridge is filled with 'surplus' food that would otherwise be wasted, providing a community-based solution to food waste whilst creating a network of accessible food for Folkestone.

 **feedingfolkestone.net/community-fridge**

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice Bureau offers free, impartial advice on debt, benefits, employment, and housing problems. For anyone needing advice you can call Shepway Citizen's Advice Bureau for local advice on **01303 241435**. This number also operates a call back service. Alternatively, you can call **0808 8487978** for the Citizen's Advice Bureau's free Kent advice line service. Telephone services are available Monday -Friday, 9.30am - 4pm.

Other regional and national support

Disabled Facilities Grant



Grant funding to assist with disabled adaptations such as stair lifts, ramping, level access bathrooms and wheelchair access. Mandatory assistance up to £30,000 and some discretionary assistance available according to circumstances. An initial assessment by an occupational therapist is required to establish need.

Contact Kent County Council Occupational Therapy  **03000 416161**

Disability Assist **disabilityassist.org.uk**

Disability Assist is a charity which helps people with disabilities in Kent to live more independent lives. This means having the right support in place and being in control to live the life they choose.

National Energy Action **nea.org.uk**

National Energy Action is a charity working to end fuel poverty and offers new a Warm and Safe Homes Advice helpline on 0800 3047159, Monday to Friday 10am -12pm.

Money Helper **moneyhelper.org.uk/en**

Money Helper joins up money and pensions guidance to make it quicker and easier to find the right help.

Well-being and emotional support

South Kent Mind

South Kent Mind makes sure anyone with a mental health problem in Deal, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, Romney Marsh and Sandwich has somewhere to turn for advice and support. To speak to one of the team call **01303 250090** between 9.30am - 3pm Monday to Friday.

Q southkentmind.org.uk

Live Well Kent

Live Well Kent and Medway provides free mental health support for people aged 17+.

Q livewellkent.org.uk

Release the Pressure

Life can get tough sometimes but talking can help. Release the Pressure has a highly-trained and experienced team available 24/7 to provide expert support no matter what you are going through.

Don't suffer in silence: text the word Kent to **85258** or call **08001 070160**.

Q kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/release-the-pressure

Cost of living support from the Government



HM Government

The Government is providing more than £15 billion in further support, targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. The Government have also set up a dedicated website for their Help for Households campaign which aims to bring together the different types of cost of living support: helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk.

Find ways to save energy in your home

If you own a property you can get recommendations for home improvements that could make your property cheaper to heat and keep warm.

Q gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency

📞 08004 44202

Pension Credit

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit could boost your income up to £3,300 a year.

Q gov.uk/pension-creditcalculator

📞 08009 91234

Energy Bills Support Scheme doubled to a one-off £400

Eligible households will get £400 of support with their energy bills through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme. This support will be paid out by energy suppliers not the council so please contact them if you have any further queries.

£650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for those on means tested benefits

Eligible households on means-tested benefits will receive a payment of £650 this year, made in two installments.

One-off £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment

Eligible pensioner households will receive an extra £300 this year to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter.

£150 Disability Cost of Living Payment

Eligible residents on disability benefits will receive a one-off payment of £150 from September.

Energy Price Guarantee

From 1 October 2022, the amount UK households pay for gas and electricity has been limited under the Energy Price Guarantee. This will now end in April 2023 (not October 2024 as originally announced). This is automatic and applies to all households. It is in addition to the one-off £400 energy bills discount.



Find out more about these schemes at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Need further support?

Further support can be found on our dedicated page on our website, which will be regularly updated: [folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support](https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)

Residents without digital access can use the computers at the council's Customer Access Point in the Civic Centre or call the council on **01303 853555** for **Council Tax and Benefits** or **01303 853660** for **Home Safe Loan/Winter Warmth Repayable Loan (Private Sector Housing)**



Folkestone & Hythe District Council is unable to help with any of the schemes detailed in this leaflet which it does not specifically run. Please use the correct contact details provided above to make sure you get the help you need quickly and easily.

Energy saving tips

Some small changes around the house can save significant amounts of energy which isn't just good for your purse, it's good for the planet as well.



Remember to turn off appliances at the plug when not in use



Draught-proof everywhere you can and top up the insulation



Turn off lights when you're not using them and switch to LED bulbs



Use your washing machine more carefully and avoid the tumble dryer



Swap your bath for a shower and keep showers short.



For more top tips, go to: energysavingtrust.org.uk

The **Home Energy Saving Trust** is working to address the climate emergency. They are experts in energy efficiency and low carbon solutions.

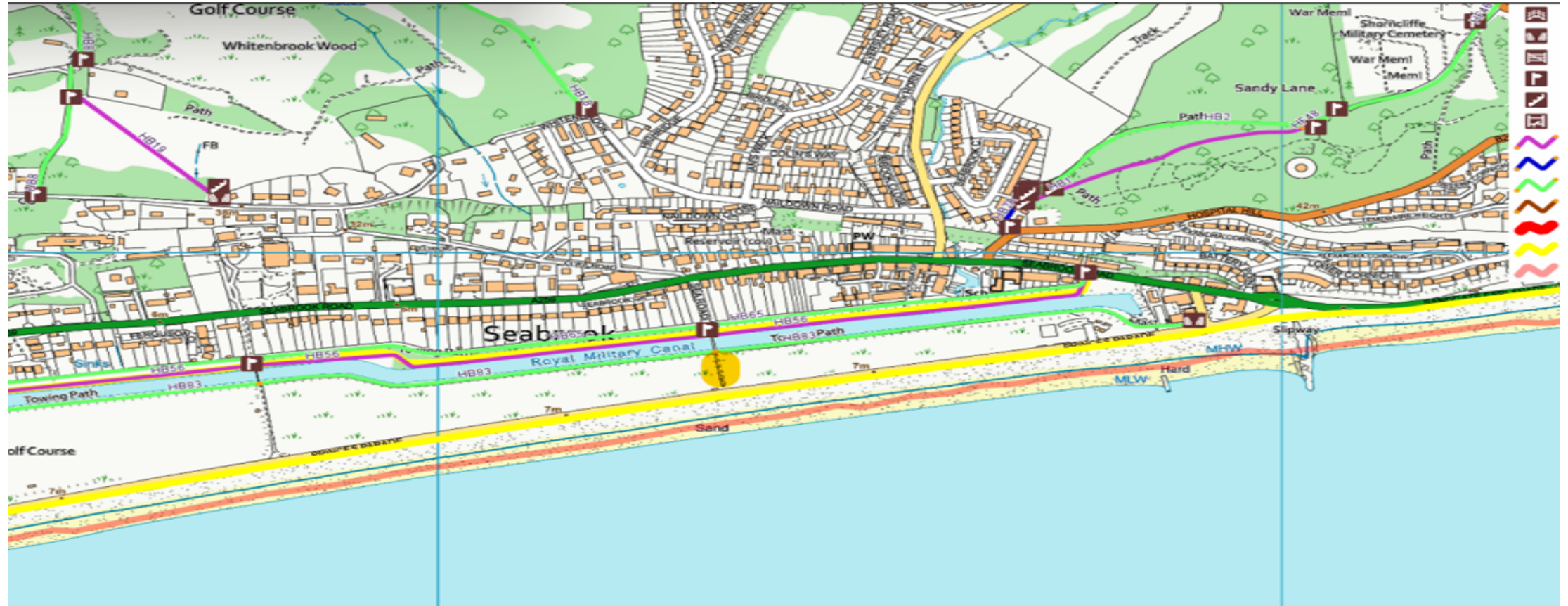
OSC update

Closure of Footpath South of Seaview Bridge

Princes Parade Project

Current Path Location

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Background

- The pathway South of Sea view Bridge facilitates a pedestrian access from Seabrook Road to Princes Parade.
- For some residents of Seabrook Road and Cliff Road it is the most direct and convenient pedestrian access.
- As part of the BAM construction management plan the closure of the path South of Seaview Bridge is required.
- Kent County Council have granted a permit for the temporary closure.

Legal Status



KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Seaview Bridge Footpath, Hythe
(PROHIBITION OF PEDESTRIANS)
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
TEMPORARY ORDER 2022

To allow the placement of hoarding, Kent County Council has made an Order to temporarily prohibit pedestrian traffic on Seaview Bridge footpath.

A closure is planned from 11th July 2022, with estimated completion by 11th January 2024, or where stated on a valid Permit (GE10049980378-01 - Kent County Council). The scheduled dates may vary for these works with appropriate signage displayed on site and the works will be displayed on [One.Network](#)

Seaview Bridge footpath will be closed south of Seaview Bridge to Princes Parade.

The alternative route is via College Bridge.

For information regarding this closure please contact Folkestone & Hythe District Council.



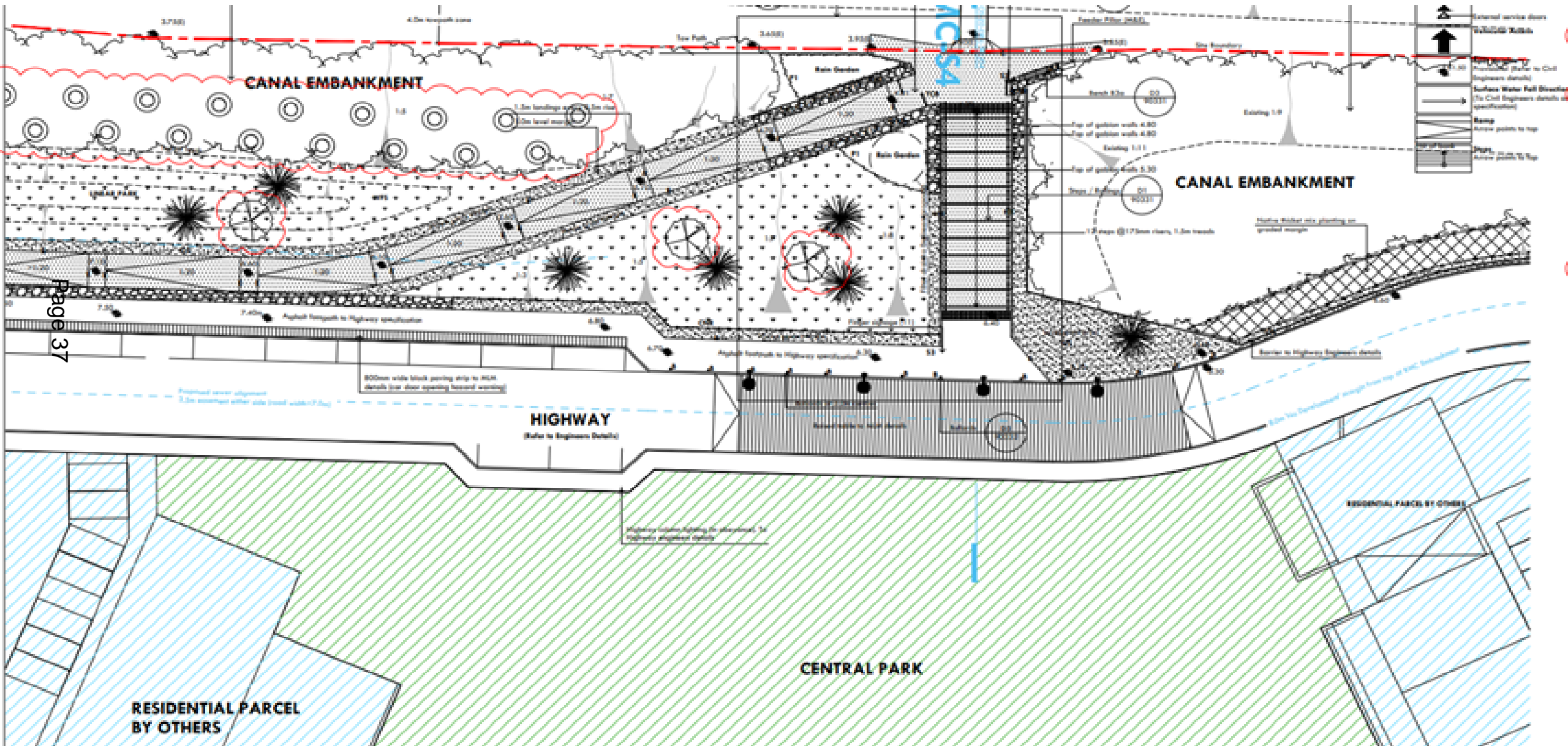
Works necessitating Temporary Closure Order

- The path will be closed from when works commence (was 31 October 2022 –January 2024)
- The path will be within the main construction site.
- Construction vehicles will be crossing the site on a frequent basis
- Construction operations including changing and reprofiling of ground levels will be taking place.
- The operations and excavations on site will destroy the delineation of the current path

Why is the closure necessary?

- To ensure the health and safety of the public and especially children when site works involving large scale plant and machinery are in operation.
 - To ensure that the construction management plan agreed by BAM can be adhered to.)
- When the road is completed there will be a partial route to the roadside and across – the drawings in the next slide show the position when the road has been built.
- The road is elevated relative to the current position with steps or a ramp provided to access to its edge.

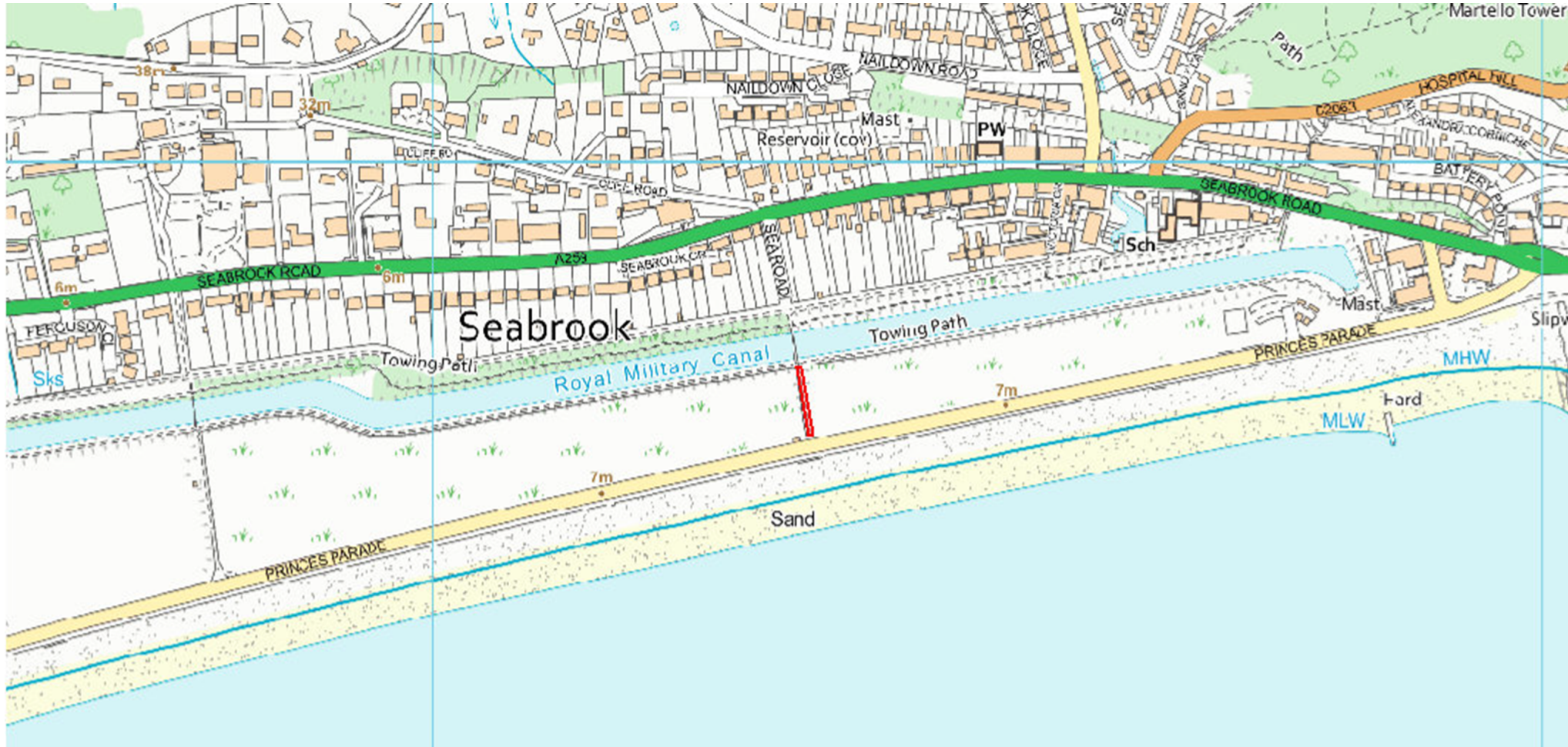
Completed Works



Suggested alternative option

- The project team have been employed because of their vast experience on these types of projects, they are entrusted to look at the best possible options and the closure is what they have advised.
- There is an alternative safe option available. The walking time from the Bridge to the alternate shortest route at College Bridge is six minutes.

Alternative Routes



Summary

- We regret the inconvenience to local residents necessitated by the closure of the footpath
- It is F&HDC's view that the health and safety of the public must be the primary consideration.
The ground levels and path delineation will be changed and temporarily obliterated.
- There is no practical safe means to retain the path during the construction works.
- The petition has been considered. The closure must be implemented when works commence.

Questions?

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