

Equality Impact Assessment



Name of project/proposal

Lepe Country Park Transformation

Contact name

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Department

Culture, Communities and Business Services

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Purpose for project/proposal

The project looks to transform Lepe Country Park in the New Forest National Park.

This will include:

A new visitor centre including café with views over the Solent, a variety of seating options, ranger offices, information point

Improved play and interpretation

Improved signage and trails

Improved car parking facilities including increased accessible parking bays at the top car park

More toilets - 6 indoor - 2 accessible

Retain the outdoor beach side toilets

The site lies within the New Forest National Park and is covered by a range of environmental designations including North Solent SSSI and North Solent National Nature Reserve.

The current building which houses the visitor facilities and offices is reaching the end of its design life resulting in increased maintenance costs. The cost of maintenance will increase until economically non viable. The building is situated below the level of the cliff and is susceptible to flooding it has been flooded on a number of occasions with the last event in February 2014 resulting in the facilities being closed to the public whilst work was undertaken and a repair cost of £90k. Consequently there was a significant loss of income to the County Council. The beach car park is frequently affected by flooding resulting in a loss of income and reduced access to the park.

The Shoreline Management Policy for this area of the coast is 'no active intervention' which restricts the ability to defend the coast. This, along with the predicted coastal change, will result in a greater number of flooding incidents of the cafe and offices and eventually loss of the foreshore car park.

The project is due for completion at the end of 2017

Consultation

Has a consultation been carried out?

Planned

Full planning consultation is taking place between July 21st - August 25th 2016 conducted by New Forest National Park Authority this can be viewed here: http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20130/view_applications

Statutory considerations

Impact

Age Medium

Disability Medium

Sexual orientation None

Race None

Religion and belief None

Gender reassignment None

Sex None

Marriage and civil partnership None

Pregnancy and maternity Low

Other policy considerations

Poverty None

Rurality None

Other factors Nothing selected

Geographical impact

All Hampshire New Forest Other

Other

Visitors from outside Hampshire

Have you identified any medium or high impact?*

Yes

No

Equality statement

By putting the new building on stilts it will allow for all year access to the building, unlike the current building which in the past has had to be closed due to flooding. The café will provide more covers than the current build and will have flexible seating options between 75-100.

Away from the new build, other areas of transformation will include an accessible sensory garden, extended boardwalk which will be buggy and wheelchair friendly and an improved play offer.

We are aware that the construction period will have an impact on the park visit, we hope to be able to make the most of the hauding around the site for interpretation messages, and potentially 'port holes' to view the building works safely.

Age:

I expect there to be a medium positive impact on age due to a wider selection of play equipment and trails available for all ages.

Disability:

I expect there to be a medium positive impact on disability due to more accessible paths, a ramp to access the visitor centre from the top car park and hygiene room available at beach level.

Further positive impacts include improved parking facilities, and by increasing the overall offer at the park a good value day out for those on a lower income.

Pregnancy and Maternity

I expect there to be a low positive impact due to more baby change facilities being provided

Date to review actions

01 Nov 2016

Final decision date

Final decision date due
Decision to be made by

20 Oct 2015
Executive Member