

## **Executive Summary of Beach Club Proposals for Ramsgate Main Sands**

The council own a plot of land, ex marina site now providing a car park, which is underutilised and contributes little to the economic development of Ramsgate.

Through the DMP and in conjunction with Cabinet Members it was agreed that this area of land should contribute positively towards a healthy lifestyle and leisure activities, by offering new facilities to attract people to visit and enjoy this part of the coast.

The preferred development option chosen to achieve these aims is to establish a Beach Club for residents and visitors. Beach clubs are common in continental resorts, particularly in Belgium where many successful ventures have been established.

Experience from visiting Beach Clubs in Europe has highlighted that there are a number of different ways of developing a Beach Club including the mix of uses, the design, the funding model and development options. At Ramsgate Main Sands the ambition is to have something that will provide new activities on the beach to be enjoyed by residents and visitors and will increase the use of the beach in shoulder months. The club will act as an attraction to the town and must have a sustainable business model that allows long-term opportunities for people to enjoy the beach and the surrounding area.

The Council commissioned consultants to develop a feasibility study to look into the potential of the Beach Club idea on Ramsgate Main Sands, in particular to identify its viability. The consultants were requested to review a number of matters including relevant planning policy, status of the site and building restrictions. An outline business case was investigated based on a mix of uses that could be on the site – to show what may be achieved and explore demand. The consultants also submitted designs of what the site could look like incorporating a number of leisure uses.

The work also included talking to existing beach sports operators across Thanet and identifying facilities where there is no existing provisions. There are potential growth markets in some of the sports currently not represented by a club and also growth opportunity for some of the existing ones.

Alongside providing a mix of activities and sports provision the proposals highlight the need for commercial activity in order to make the scheme financially viable. This could include a café, restaurant, meeting/club rooms, a treatment room and self-catering accommodation. The site provides a perfect space for café and restaurant facilities in relation to passing footfall and the sea views. There is also demand for self-catering accommodation in Thanet – particularly for the family market and especially with access to the sea.

It is envisaged that in order to attract a leisure provider to take this forward, a long lease would be advertised supported by a concession agreement, to find the right operator who is able to provide the mix of services, facilities and activities required. The Council would expect to see something that will enhance the beach and the Club's services and activities should take advantage of the location and not negatively affect the beach and its surrounds.

The visuals annexed to the Cabinet report provide an indication of what a development on the site could look like including the mix of uses as mentioned in the above paragraph and also including parking, sports equipment storage, outside events space and improved vehicle access and footfall access.