



South Hams
District Council

Improving the well-being of the people of the South Hams

South Hams District Council

Salcombe Harbour Authority

Consultation on Batson Pontoons Replacement Project

Introduction

The Harbour Authority pontoons located in Batson Creek have almost reached the end of their functional life and are beyond economic repair. As a consequence, the Harbour Board has decided to replace them during the winter of 2009/10.

There are a number of decisions to be made on the size, shape and means of securing the new pontoons. The Board is keen to have the views of Stakeholders and other interested parties before making a final decision on these issues. There will be a six week period of public consultation between Monday 5 January and Monday 15 February 2009. There will be two public meetings, one on the 28 January 2009 at Quay House Kingsbridge, and the other at Cliff House, Salcombe on 29 January 2009. The meetings will start at 7 pm.

The Board will consider the issues raised and it is anticipated that a decision will be made at the Harbour Board Meeting on 23 March 2009.

The proposals and main options are set out below and the Harbour Board would welcome your views. Please send any comments you may have on this consultation paper to:

Salcombe Harbour Office
Whitestrans
Salcombe
Devon
TQ8 8BU

Email: salcombe.harbour@southhams.gov.uk

by Monday 15 February 2009

Background

The weather, tides and time have taken their toll on the current pontoons which are of concrete construction supported by polystyrene floats. Various sections have become damaged and have been replaced by redundant pontoon sections and as a result, there are now a number of uneven sections. This repair process has led to a mismatch of pontoons which have uneven sections. The incompatibilities of the pontoon sections exert considerable stress on the joints and overall are not very attractive.

It is intended that the current pontoon system will be used through the 2009 season and then be replaced during the winter of 2009/2010. The pontoons currently provide berthing facilities for 245 craft consisting mainly of small motor boats to a length of 5.5 metres and a beam of 2 metres. The pontoon provides a major berthing facility for the small boat owner who, by tradition, enjoys the harbour and sea facilities in one of the most beautiful estuaries in the country.

The cost of the replacement pontoons will be considerable and arrangements are being put in place to support the cost. This will involve a loan from the Council and use of harbour fund reserves.

Construction.

The Harbour Board are determined that the new pontoon will be both practical and smart in appearance and to this end have already established informed views on the materials to be used. To achieve this it is proposed that:

- The frame will be of galvanised steel construction supported by plastic covered floatation.
- The decking will be constructed of recycled plastic “earthwood” material which is robust, durable, looks smart and has a low maintenance cost.

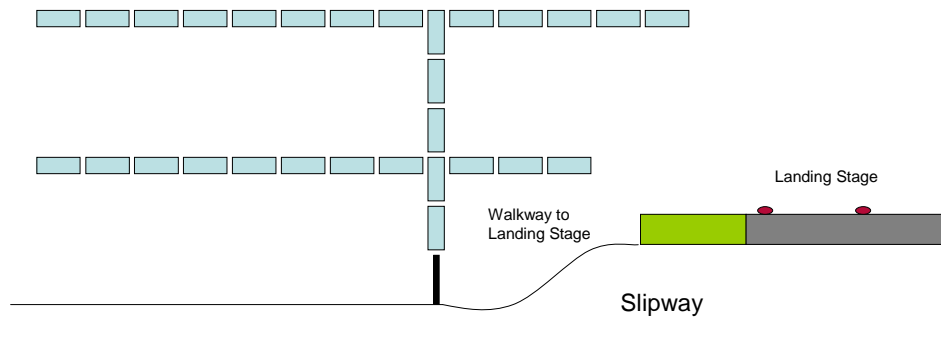
This proposal is the mid price range option and represents the best value for money.

The all-plastic option has been rejected because, although the basic pontoons are less expensive, once all of the fixtures and fittings required to complete the installation are included, the plastic pontoons do not offer any financial savings and are not as stable as other options. Furthermore, the plastic pontoons look like a temporary solution, which is not the quality of facility Salcombe Harbour is striving to achieve.

The concrete option was dismissed because of its excessive cost. At almost three times more expensive than the steel framed option it is considered unaffordable. The concrete option is also extremely heavy and would require a more robust and therefore more expensive securing system.

Size and Shape.

The layout of the current pontoon system is:



The present pontoon provides 245 berths for vessels of up to 2m beam.

One option is to replace like for like, however there is an opportunity with the replacement project to modify the design to improve the facility for the benefit of all harbour users. Inevitably whatever design is decided upon will constitute a compromise, but getting the right balance which best meets the majority of stakeholders requirements is essential. Therefore the following factors need to be taken into account:

- There is a trend that boats are getting larger in the beam and therefore one of the considerations is whether to increase the width of the berths. There are almost unlimited options, five of which are detailed below:
 - To leave the berth size at 2m beam and maintain the current number of berths
 - To increase the number of berths for vessels of 2m beam by increasing the length of the pontoon
 - To increase the berth size by reducing the number of berths available
 - To increase the berth size by increasing the available length of pontoon
 - A compromise of a small increase in pontoon length to accommodate a proportion of larger berths. There would need to be an additional charge for wider berths.
- Boats are currently secured to the pontoon by the bow and a stern chain. There is an option to fit fingers. Fingers are more secure but take space

from the overall available length which could be used for berths; there are also cost and maintenance implications. There are three possible options:

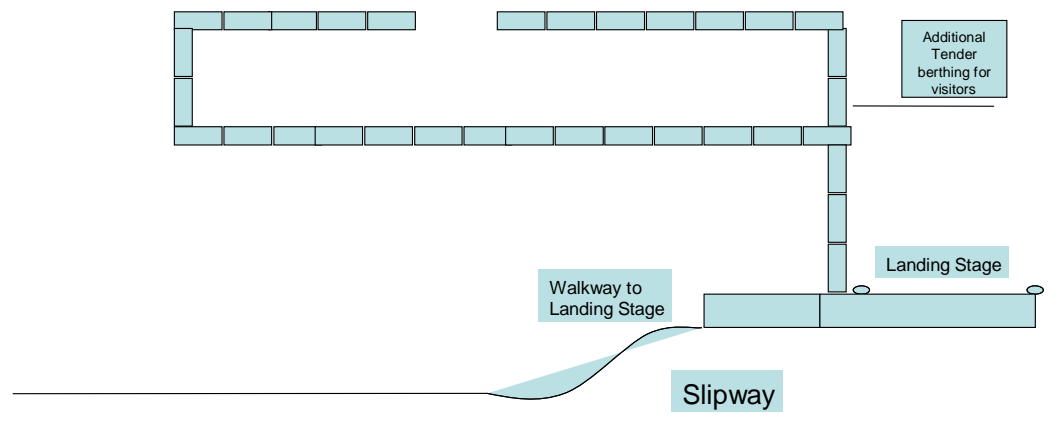
- Remain with stern chains, accepting the ongoing maintenance costs
- Fit fingers, accepting the increased capital expenditure which would be offset by reduced ongoing maintenance over a period of time. This would require an acceptance of a reduced number of berths or an increased length of pontoon.
- A compromise solution of a mixture of fingers and stern chains optimized to the available budget and space. There would need to be an additional charge for berths with fingers.

Access to the Pontoons

- The current access point to the pontoon could be changed to make use of the existing Batson Slipway Pontoon Bridge. Bridges are expensive and therefore utilising an existing facility would be cost effective.
 - Utilisation of the slipway pontoon bridge will increase the footfall in this area requiring congestion problems to be carefully managed in the design.
- By re-arranging the current pontoon layout, the outboard downstream side could be made available for tender berthing, without any loss of pontoon berths.
 - This would go some way towards helping with Salcombe's tender berthing problem at Whitestrand and elsewhere.
 - Getting the right layout will generate a small number of alongside berths, which would provide improved disabled access to the water.

A proposed layout is shown below. This option provides for:

- 245 berths
 - 183 berths for vessels of up to 2m beam, 4 of which would be alongside
 - 56 berths for vessels of up to 2.2m beam, with the option of fingers
 - 6 alongside berths for vessels of up to 5.5m length and 2.5m beam for customers who require easier access
 - Tender parking for up to 10 resident's tenders
 - Increased capacity for customers launching and recovering from the slipway and for picking up and setting down passengers and crew.
- Tidal access would be gained to all areas of the pontoon within a 10-15 minute time window.



Securing of pontoons.

There are two methods of securing the pontoons to the seabed, either chains or piles. The considerations for each option are as follows;

Chains Involve

- Lower capital investment
- Higher ongoing annual maintenance, overtaking the through life cost of piles after 5 years, resulting in increased berth charges
- Potential maintenance issues in the future
- Least secure
- Considerable movement
- Sea bed scour from chains
- Would require separate bridge with associated costs because of the susceptibility to tidal surges causing movement of the system
- Continuation of the current 7 month contract (April to October)

Piles Involve

- Larger capital investment than chains
- Lower through life maintenance costs therefore most cost effective option over the life of the pontoon system
- Simplified maintenance task
- Most secure with no lateral movement
- Preferred environmental option on fundus because no scour from chains
- Would give option of utilising slipway pontoon bridge
- Visual impact would have to be addressed with paint colour scheme
- Potential for an extension of the contract period for berth holders as the pontoons will/may be able to remain in commission until Christmas
- The industry standard method of securing pontoons

Pontoon furniture

The pontoons will be equipped with First Aid, fire fighting, public rescue equipment and emergency ladders.

Consideration would be given to improve security with the use of access gates to restrict access to berth holders only.

The requirements for disabled access will be accommodated.

What are your views?

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