



RYDE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICER REPORT

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| Committee: | Full Council |
| Date: | Monday, 5 September 2022 |
| Title of Report: | Ryde Beach Accessibility |
| Context: | This report aims to seek approval for the improvement of the access to Ryde Beach for wheelchair users and people who struggle with mobility in general. |
| Report Author: | Annette Johansson-Steed Projects Officer |

1. SUMMARY

We aim to improve the access to- and the facilities on offer at- Ryde Beach, in keeping with our ethos of inclusivity. This will be achieved by:

- The installation of a non-slip polyester mat to create an access route on the sand for pedestrians and people with limited mobility or in wheelchairs
- Beach wheelchairs
- Water wheelchairs
- Beach walkers
- Two accessible beach huts
- Wheelchair friendly picnic tables
- Raised sunbeds

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Following complaints by residents and visitors this summer, and to keep up with facilities offered in other seaside resorts, Ryde Town Council wants to make a stretch of the beach accessible to wheelchair users, and people who struggle with mobility, so they too can enjoy beach days with their friends and family.

After consultation with Isle Access, Unlimited Island and research into accessible resorts on the mainland, we have identified the following key improvements:

- The installation of a **non-slip polyester mat** to create an access route on the sand for pedestrians and people with limited mobility or in wheelchairs. This would be set up as a main path from the pavement towards the sea, and across the sand horizontally so people can settle down in family groups without obstructing the path.



- **Beach wheelchairs, water wheelchairs and beach walkers** for people to book from our beach attendants;



- Two accessible **beach huts**, **wheelchair friendly picnic tables** and a number of **raised sunbeds** (available to hire from our beach attendants) would complement the accessible beach experience.



Further consultation with Sean Newton of the Isle of Wight Council will determine the exact location of the accessible beach, as well as permissions for an additional storage solution for all the new equipment, and possible locations for the accessible beach huts.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

South Western Railway are welcoming applications from local authorities for projects promoting Accessibility and Inclusion. The deadline for bids is 16th September 2022, and match funded applications are favoured.

RTC proposes to match fund £10,000, or approx. 30% of the total project cost.

According to statistics by VisitBritain.org, the total expenditure generated by those with an impairment or those travelling within a group where a member had an impairment is estimated to be £15.3 billion. By providing accessible facilities, Ryde will benefit from increased tourism and spending by the 'purple pound'.

4. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- To pursue 'Access for All' on Ryde beaches
- To apply for South Western railway fund
- To agree to match funding contribution if required
- To delegate authority to officers to develop the grant application and deliver all aspects of the project.