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Principal Planner  
Planning & Building Control Directorate  
Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture (DEFA)  
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23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022

Dear Mr Balmer

### **Additional Information in regard to Planning Application 22/01102/B**

In respect of the planning application for a Beach Shower Pole Unit, the Commissioners have asked the office to forward the following clarifications in regard to Planning application 22/01102/B.

#### **Selection of Location**

The choice of location came after a lot of consideration, thought, and consultation with a range of professionals including the architect, a builder, a drainage expert, and our contracted Health and Safety professional.

The general Laxey Promenade and Beach visitor area is a busy and thriving visitor destination with a range of appropriate facilities such as refreshment outlets, play and picnic areas. The sandy beach and the relatively safe waters

In terms of the location, clearly on other beaches a pole type beach shower can be mounted somewhere on the beach itself as the context is relatively benign; in Laxey's case the characteristics of the beach mitigate against placement on the beach primarily because of sea conditions and the steeper topography of the upper beach area just below the sea wall: circumstances which cause the beach just below the sea wall (and the wall itself) to be a harsh environment for any structure. During the Autumn/Winter the unit would be subject to wave immersion and overtopping that carries many large pebbles which would likely obliterate a pole shower. In this context, it is practically certain that it would not survive this period if located even at the top of the beach. It would also be possible that the unit would be badly damaged in the summer season: the raft has had to be removed on two occasions this season due to strong waves experienced in 'summer-storms'. Further indication of the difficulties of this location can be seen in the failure of the hand-rails installed by DoI on the new beach steps several years ago; these were washed away completely within several weeks.

The Commissioners also considered sites at both the DoI owned harbour toilets and outside the public toilets at the southern end of the Promenade. The Commissioners felt that these

locations were too inconvenient for beach users and swimmers who tend to congregate at the 'central' area of the beach. It is anticipated that the beach pole shower would be used by beach goers to remove sand as much as by swimmers and hence a 'sand trap' will also be installed should the application be successful.

The Commissioners also looked at installing the beach pole shower on the Promenade walkway, but this is far too narrow and was not considered to be an acceptable location in terms of pedestrian access. The walkway experiences a large volume of footfall particularly during the season and is increasing busy during the Autumn/Winter period.

The Commissioners considered drainage from the shower and were advised that soak aways would not be suitable form of grey-water drainage for the be. The presence of drainage facilities on the Promenade Green was also noted. These were the subject of a camera survey by a professional drainage contractor and were indicated as suitable and as having the capacity for the purpose of a beach shower. The location is also convenient for a mains water supply.

A location closer to the wall of the adjacent stone 'garage' building was also considered, but several practical issues mitigated against this positioning. If the shower were attached to the wall we were advised that there was the potential for causing damp in the stone structure. The area is also a thoroughfare for the large wheeled refuse bins that serve the adjacent ice-cream business and the Beach Buddies receptacle. Other locations for this facility were considered but it was felt that these would be too prominent in the vicinity or too close to the children's play area on the other side of the building. There is also an attractive 'Three Legs of Man' pebble symbol in this location which would have to be removed.

### **Road Safety**

The Commissioners took advice from their contracted H&S professional. He noted the current presence of the Ice Cream shop/kiosk, the children's play area, and the use of the Green as a family picnic area. All these facilities involve crossing the Promenade access road from the Promenade walkway. Despite these circumstances pedestrianisation of the road would likely be a very unpopular option with the public and businesses: particularly in terms of parking provision and access. A low picket fence was considered on three sides of the drainage enclosure, but it was felt that this would provide a much-increased level of visual intrusion for the public and residents.

In the last six years, Garff Commissioners there have never been any written reports of speeding on the Promenade itself and there are no records of verbal reports. Speeding undoubtedly may occur at times in this location - as on any highway. It is likely, however, that if it were a frequent factor experience from elsewhere indicates that we would be contacted about the issue on a more regular basis.

In all these respects, the Commissioners would very much welcome discussion with DoI Highways in regard to enhancing road safety for anyone accessing the various facilities from the Promenade walkway.

### **Potential for Anti-Social Behaviour**

Clearly this exists here and perhaps at any location on the Promenade. It could be argued, however, that this would be reduced in the central location as opposed to the potential locations at either end of the Promenade in the evening, particularly at the far southern end toilets. There is an occasional report of vandalism at our current facilities such as the Children's play area, but these are sporadic and infrequent. It is likely that the visible location of the play

area assists in benignly 'policing' these matters. In addition, the Kiosk business has CCTV present all around the central building which acts as a deterrent.

### **Noise Generation from General Use of the Shower by Visitors to the Promenade facilities and Beach**

This aspect has been considered very carefully by the Commissioners. It would clearly be difficult to police the sound made by children/youths/adults but in the context of a busy beach and Promenade area the noise generated is unlikely to be out of character during the daytime. The Commissioners have noted that adult swimmers do visit the Promenade at times early in the morning when the area is generally quiet. This could cause a nuisance if noise is made so signage could be installed to mitigate this. The Commissioners have already received complaints from Members of the public in regard to the noise made by the swimmers in the morning as they access the sea so in a sense this may be a wider issue that needs to be addressed. The Beach Pole Unit will have two 'percussive' buttons to release the water on a timer which is likely to assist in reducing any 'horseplay' to a minimum.

### **Visual Intrusion**

The Promenade area contains a range of facilities such as the Children's Play Area, public shelter, Picnic Benches, Services for the buildings/businesses, Signage, traffic and welcoming signage poles, etc. Such facilities are to be expected in the environs of a busy visitor friendly promenade/beach area and the Commissioners feel that the addition of the shower pole is unlikely to add significant intrusion to the beach scene.

The Commissioners have considered alternatives to the proposals that have been submitted and feel that if a beach shower is to be provided this is the most appropriate location in this context of an area which has established visitor facilities and attractions. The addition of a beach shower facility has been requested by Members of the public in recent years. Such units have become an expectation on beaches that serve both swimmers and those engaging in play/activities on the sands.

The Commissioners feel that to meet the needs of visitors they have found the most acceptable solution that puts all the above considerations into an appropriate balance. Members are very aware that the Planning Committee and the Planning Officer will assess these matters and conclude on the impact of the proposal as well as the benefits it will bring to the wider experience of the Laxey Beach and Promenade visitor area. The Commissioners are very aware that the public will be contributing comment on the application and will of course be open to discussion of any amendments or actions that the Public, the Planning Officer, the Planning Committee, and the Highways Officer bring forward.

Members thank the Planning Officer for the opportunity to submit further clarification of the proposals.

Many thanks

Martin Royle  
Deputy Clerk  
On behalf of Garff Commissioners

