



## **Esplanade Storm Shelters – Window Replacement Options Paper**

### **Background**

As part of the devolution process, Minehead Town Council took on the long-term lease of the Esplanade on the seafront, which included responsibility for the management and maintenance of the area's hard landscape features.

In the 18 months prior to devolution, two storm shelters were installed as part of the Esplanade Improvement Project. Although the project was funded through Somerset Council (SC), it was delivered by Minehead Coast and Development Trust (MCDT). As part of the project, a maintenance reserve fund and agreement was established between the two parties to ensure the ongoing upkeep of the shelters. This fund, totalling £17,500 in 2023 and associated agreement were held between SC and MCDT and were subsequently transferred to the Town Council as part of the devolution arrangements.

### **Current Situation**

The shelters are designed to allow people to sit protected from the elements while enjoying sea views. The original design featured 8.8 mm laminated glass windows (two 4.4 mm panels bonded together for safety). While the structures remain sound, during early summer the windows were subjected to antisocial behaviour resulting in damage to the glazing. For safety reasons, the Amenities Team removed the damaged glass panels.

Councillors are now asked to consider the most appropriate course of action for the future of these shelters. Four options have been identified:

#### **Option 1 – Replace with Like-for-Like Laminated Glass**

**Description:** Replace the windows with laminated glass, upgrading to 13.8 mm toughened laminated glass for added strength and safety.

**Estimated Cost:** £1,500

#### **Pros:**

- Retains the original design and appearance.
- Glass will not become mottled or weathered over time.

#### **Cons:**

- While stronger, the glass could still be vulnerable to vandalism.
- High cost if breakages become a recurring issue.

#### **Option 2 – Replace with Polycarbonate Panels**

**Description:** Install 8 mm clear polycarbonate panels as an alternative to glass.

**Estimated Cost:** £850

#### **Pros:**

- Lower cost than glass replacement.
- More resistant to breakage and vandalism.

**Cons:**

- Scratches more easily than glass.
- Over time, can develop a cloudy or 'milky' appearance.

**Option 3 – Redesign the Shelter Frontage**

**Description:** Rethink the frontage design by partially cladding the window to create a back for the bench and reducing the glazed/open area. Remaining sections could be filled with glass, polycarbonate, or left open.

**Estimated Cost:** Approx. £1,500 (subject to detailed planning)

**Pros:**

- Potential to reduce future maintenance costs.
- Could improve user comfort and shelter experience.

**Cons:**

- Higher initial cost and requires design, planning, and stakeholder consultation.
- May reduce sea views and could inadvertently increase antisocial behaviour by making the space more enclosed.

**Option 4 – Do Nothing**

**Description:** Leave the shelters without glazing, tidying up the existing frames and beads to improve appearance.

**Estimated Cost:** Nominal

**Pros:**

- No significant additional expenditure.
- May reduce antisocial gathering within shelters.

**Cons:**

- Diminishes the intended user experience.
- Likely to be unpopular with the public.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that Councillors carefully review the four options and determine the preferred course of action. Once a decision has been made, the Clerk should be formally instructed and delegated the authority to undertake the necessary works and incur the associated expenditure from the relevant budget.

Ben Parker  
Town Clerk  
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