

North Yorkshire Council

Scarborough and Whitby Area Committee

29 November 2024

Whitby Cliff Lift

Briefing Note of the Corporate Director of Environment

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Whitby's Cliff lift, on North Terrace was opened in 1931 and it consists of a lift within a vertical shaft running down from the cliff top through the boulder clay, leading to a 221ft long pedestrian tunnel out to the beach.
- 1.2 The lift was closed in April 2022 when corrosion was discovered in its structure. For the last three years the borough and then unitary council ran a free subsidised bus service over the summer to replace the lift.
- 1.3 No income has historically been generated from the lift. Chalet users used to get a free lift pass but this was removed when the charge was dropped. Income from non-chalet users did not cover the cost of the lift operator.

2.0 Nature of the Problem

- 2.1 A steady increase in water ingress is causing corrosion of the structure. There is no easy solution to prevent this. Water ingress also causes more frequent renewal of operational parts to lift car and mechanisms. Some parts require to be renewed annually due to this.
- 2.2 The top station building needs structural remedial works as there is cracking in the brick pillars, and the roof is bowing in places. The lifting gear is within the top station so would need to be removed or protected in situ.
- 2.3 A ventilation system needs to be incorporated within the facility to reduce the humidity.
- 2.4 It is possible to restore the lift to working order, but this does not address the water ingress and ventilation problems and would still require significant ongoing revenue funding for yearly maintenance and parts replacements and the employment cost of a seasonal lift operator.

3.0 Solution

- 3.1 No formal decision has been made yet.
- 3.2 Align Property Partners have been commissioned to carry out surveys and further work to refine costs.

3.3 Ultimately the decision will come before the Executive and as part of that there will be discussion with local members.

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