CABINET 17TH MAY 2007

RIVER MOORINGS – ENFORCEMENT OF SHORT STAY MOORING RULES (Report by the Head of Operations)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval to enter into an agreement with the Environment Agency for the Agency's river inspectors to take action when necessary, to ensure that craft using the District Council's short stay moorings do not overstay the time periods allowed.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The District Council provides a number of short stay moorings along the river Great Ouse for use by visitors coming to the area along the river system by boat.
- 2.2 Whilst most boat owners use these moorings for their intended purpose of day visits, there are a small number of local boat owners who live aboard boats that tie up at the moorings for days at a time in order to avoid paying residential mooring fees at local marinas. The effect of this is to deny use of the moorings by day visitors, discouraging them from stopping to visit.
- 2.3 The District Council does not have the resources to provide daily checks on boats using its moorings along the river and as a result, by the time we find out a boat is using a mooring as a long stay, it can take several days to issue the appropriate notices in order to get the boat moved.

3. INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Environment Agency employ full time river inspectors, who are out and about on the river on a daily basis, ensuring that waterway rules are observed and that facilities are in good order. They have the power to move any boats that overstay on moorings owned by them and do so on a regular basis.
- 3.2 Following discussions with the Agency, a licence agreement has been drawn up that would enable the river inspectors to act on behalf of the District Council and ensure that boat users do not abuse the short stay mooring that we provide. The agreement is similar to those already in place between the EA and other councils.
- 3.3 The agreement does not require the Environment Agency to undertake the task, it simply permits them to do so when they see facilities being

used improperly. The licence agreement will be annual, with provision for either side to terminate at one months notice. There are no fees involved and the council retains all rights and ownership of the moorings, along with the right to undertake enforcement where appropriate.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The river Great Ouse is a major attraction for the District, greater use of which has considerable potential to enhance and promote local tourism and economic development. Ensuring that visitors using the river have short stay moorings available is an important issue and this proposed licence agreement will help to ensure that.
- 4.2 With the Inland Waterways Festival due to take place in St Ives later this year, availability of temporary moorings will be a key issue for those visiting to take part.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Cabinet are invited to approve arrangements for the District Council to enter into agreement, initially for a period of twelve months, for the Environment Agency to enforce the terms and conditions of short stay river moorings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HDC / Environment Agency Agreement.

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