

**Agenda Item No:**

**Report to:** Charity Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 29th March 2011

**Report Title:** Seafront Management Forward Business Plan for the Foreshore Trust

**Report By:** Virginia Gilbert  
Head of Amenities and Leisure

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**Purpose of Report**

To outline for the Charity Committee the proposed elements of a forward business plan so that they may consider how surplus income might be used to support the objects of the Foreshore Trust.

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**Recommendation(s)**

- 1. That the Charity Committee support the creation of a business plan for future expenditure to protect and maintain foreshore assets, to maximise income where feasible and to enhance the foreshore for the enjoyment of the public.**
- 2. That officers bring a draft business plan to your June meeting.**
- 3. That the Charity Committee appoint a representative to work with Council officers to establish precise foreshore boundaries or shared allocation of costs where assets straddle HBC and Foreshore Trust land.**

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**Reasons for Recommendations**

It is important that the Charity Committee are aware of the extent and complexity of seafront responsibilities and the likely cost of emerging liabilities.

There are major areas of seafront refurbishment that will emerge and require funding in the near future. There may also be opportunities to increase the Trust's income to help defray maintenance costs.

Interest in the seafront is intense and opportunities exist for enhancement in underdeveloped areas.

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## Introduction

1. Although the management of the Foreshore was transferred from the Council to Foreshore Trustees following the creation of a scheme by the Charities Commission in 2006, the day to day management of Foreshore Trust land and assets has remained with the Council, delivered primarily through the Resort Services team at the direction of Foreshore Trustees.
2. An initial list of routine activities and regular events was provided for Foreshore Trustees which has formed the basis of the operational and routine management and maintenance arrangements. There has been ongoing consultation with Foreshore Trustees over significant service decisions.
3. At the request of the Charity Committee, to assist in the prudent management of its assets and allocation of its resources, HBC officers are developing a forward business plan for the Committee's consideration.

## Components of a Business Plan

4. The business plan will draw together in a single document the proposals for investment and significant repairing liabilities that are emerging from the ongoing assessment of foreshore assets and the aspirations of the local community and groups with an interest in the seafront. The plan, when completed, will mirror the Council's internal practice of maintaining a rolling Repairs and Renewals programme (for recurring expenses) and Capital Programme (for significant investment projects).
5. For the initial plan, proposals will be categorised as 'essential' or 'desirable' and an estimate of the timing of the investment will be included (short term - this year, medium term - 2-4 years, long term 5+ yrs). For new schemes, the Committee will be given an indication of future maintenance implications and/or expected income as well as the initial investment requirement.

## Repairs and Renewals

6. Routine inspections, annual and seasonal maintenance and responsive repairs are covered by the operational budget of the Foreshore team and recharged to the Foreshore Trust in the annual accounting process. This covers general wear and tear to a range of assets including promenade surfacing, railings, shelters, street furniture, signs, steps, groynes, buildings and other structures.
7. In recent years, however, it has become necessary to arrange specialist examinations of the concrete structures along the seafront. From these reports, a picture is emerging of significant concrete repairs and waterproofing that will be required to structures, particularly around Marina and Bottle Alley. A programme of repairs required over the coming years will be proposed.
8. Other assets, particularly railings and wooden steps, are reaching end of life and will need to be replaced gradually. The Foreshore Trust and the Council will share responsibility for these structures depending on their location along the seafront.

9. The Trustees will need to consider emerging requests for resurfacing of the Winch Road and maintenance of barriers around the Stade area.

### **Commercial Opportunities**

10. A range of organisations and commercial activities are undertaken on the seafront and areas of trust land. Commercial facilities provided include ice creams and catering, adventure golf, amusements and rides, deck chair and sun lounger hire, museums, aquarium, miniature railway. There are also short term commercial activities and events held such as the Sunday Markets.
11. Opportunities will arise for additional trading and catering sites and proposals for equipment hire as well as developing potential uses for empty buildings. In some cases, notably the White Rock Baths, the Trust will need to determine the extent of investment that will be undertaken in light of the potential for income or other positive outcomes.
12. We also license approximately 400 beach hut, chalet and boat sites at various locations including trust land. There remains a strong demand for all sites and the Trust may wish to consider additional chalets on its land on a weekly, monthly and seasonal basis.
13. Off street car parks on trust land are currently managed by Council Parking Services. The Trust will need to consider proposals to pave and line extended areas at Rock a Nore car park.

### **Leisure**

14. Leisure activities perhaps provide the greatest opportunity for Foreshore Trust land to benefit seafront users. This can be provided in an informal way, simply as a place for walking, running, cycling, fishing or swimming as well as attracting a range of different water sports including rowing, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing, boat angling, diving etc.
15. A new seafront multi use games area, the 'Pelham Playa' is now complete and in use. This is a great new community facility that has been made possible by the hard work and determination of the Hastings Old Town Residents Association and funding from the Foreshore Trust. It will be jointly managed by the Council and Hastings Adventure Golf and provides a stunning location for many different sports.
16. New proposals will include support for a seafront exercise trail, a coastal heritage trail and a new lifeguard station.

### **Determination of boundaries**

17. The boundary between Foreshore Trust and HBC land ownership along the seafront has been established and agreed between the parties. Maps are now with the Land Registry for their assessment. It is emerging, however, that the boundary lines are not always precise enough to show whether a specific set of steps or railings lie on one side or the other. In some cases, as at Bottle Alley, the HBC-owned promenade may overhang the Trust-owned land to the sea wall, making determination of repairing liabilities for a shared structure problematic.

18. It is the officers' view that these areas of uncertainty are best dealt with by a walking inspection with the Trust's surveyor. This would inform a report to the Committee with clarification of ownership or a recommendation for an allocation of liability where precise lines of responsibility are not possible or practical. The Committee is asked to instruct its representative and consider the outcome at its next meeting.

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### **Wards Affected**

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

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### **Area(s) Affected**

Central Hastings, East Hastings, North St. Leonards, South St. Leonards

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### **Policy Implications**

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	Yes
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No

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### **Background Information**

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### **Officer to Contact**

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