

Agenda Item No: 12

Report to: Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: 7 June 2011

Report Title: **URGENT ITEM Improvements to Foreshore Trust Land**

Report By: Kevin Boorman
Head of Communications & Marketing

Purpose of Report

To update the Charity Committee on work being carried out near the fishmarket, and to ask permission for improvement work to be carried out on land owned by the Foreshore Trust, and leased to Hastings Fishmarket Enterprises.

Recommendation(s)

That the Charity Committee give their approval for the fishmarket improvement work planned for FT land.

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that all of the work carried out on land leased to HFE is completed as per the proposals, and that a small sliver of work is not left undone because it falls within the FT's demise. Not to do it could compromise the safety arrangements in the vicinity of a level crossing over the miniature railway

Introduction

1. Hastings Borough Council is making improvements to the load/unload arrangements at Hastings Fishmarket, the project is part funded by HBC, and part by the European Fisheries Fund ('EFF').
2. Most of the work is being carried out on land owned directly by HBC and leased to Hastings Fishmarket Enterprises ('HFE'), but a very small amount, literally just a few square metres, is on land owned by the Foreshore Trust ('FT') and leased to HFE.
3. Work is due to start in the very near future, hopefully by the end of this month, and rather than omit the very small area of work on FT land, the permission of the Charity Committee is sought to improve the HFE land owned by the FT.
4. It was only in the process of finalising the contractual arrangements for the HFE work that it became clear that a small sliver of land adjacent to a level crossing over the miniature railway was not directly owned by HBC, but by the FT. The chair of the Charity Committee, Cllr Barlow, and the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Pragnell, have agreed that this item can be considered at the 7 June 2011 Charity Committee meeting under the urgency rules.

Background

5. As part of the Stade Improvements Scheme, it had always been intended to reintroduce physical barriers to the winch road/working beach. Access has been effectively unrestricted for some time, following the failure of the previous barriers. As well as the rising bollard/lifting barrier being installed on the 'RNLI access road' on the Stade improvement site proper, two heavy duty 'blockers' are to be installed on the access roads either side of the fishmarket. The cost of these was always to be met by the Stade improvements scheme, but the opportunity has been taken to look at improving facilities elsewhere on the fishmarket by using the money committed to the barriers as match for EFF monies.
6. Discussions have been taking place with HFE for some time now about improving the load/unload arrangements at Hastings Fishmarket. Currently large lorries are loaded on the main Rock-a-Nore Road, inevitably causing serious congestion at busy times. The improvements planned include surfacing the area to the east of the fishmarket (currently compacted shingle, which 'pools' badly in wet weather), and providing an area for lorries to safely be loaded off the public highway.
7. Detail improvements are also planned to the west of the fishmarket, to the area between the fishmarket and the Jerwood Gallery.
8. The improvements planned to help the operation of the fishmarket were agreed by the Marine Management Organisation ('MMO') with half the cost of the total scheme being met by EFF.

9. As noted above, most of the work is to the east of the fishmarket, and comprises surfacing work, improved access to the load/unload area from Rock-a-Nore Road, and the blockers to control access to the winch road/working beach. The work to the west of the fishmarket includes the installation of another blocker, and work to move the level crossing over the miniature railway.
10. The HBC/FT boundary line passes across the extreme south west corner of the land leased to HFE, as indicated on the attached diagram. The work being planned for HFE land owned by the FT just comprises moving the level crossing over the miniature railway – removing an existing fence, moving timber bollards, and constructing new hardstanding on the approach to the level crossing.
11. If the work were not carried out as per the plan, vehicles could park in such a way as to obstruct visibility over the level crossing, and this could compromise safety. In addition, the road surface in the vicinity of the level crossing would not be finished, leaving a rough, uneven surface, which would be unsatisfactory for pedestrians.

Analysis

12. The work planned for FT land will in no way restrict access (apart from during the construction stage, briefly), and will enhance the appearance of the area; it will also improve the protection of the working beach. Without the level crossing work being carried out, safety of both vehicles and pedestrians over the crossing could be compromised.
13. All capital costs associated with the work will be met by HBC and the EFF grant – no capital costs will be incurred by the FT.
14. The scheme in its totality will significantly improve the operation of the fishmarket, so benefitting the fishermen it services, and the security of the winch road/working beach, by only allowing bona fide pass holders' access. The current unrestricted access means the beach has almost become a free car park. This is unsightly, and at very busy times restricting the winch road to such an extent that the fishermen cannot set their fish to market.
15. It would seem perverse to omit the small area of work planned for FT land simply because it is on HFE land. Apart from being the HFE/FT boundary, there is no logical reason for excluding the works – it is all on HFE land, and omitting it would leave the sliver of FT land untouched, looking odd, and for no logical reason save it being on FT as opposed to HBC land. Moreover, to omit the work could adversely affect the safety of vehicles and pedestrians using the level crossing.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that the Charity Committee give their approval to the fishmarket improvement work planned on FT land.

Wards Affected

Old Town

Area(s) Affected

East Hastings

Policy Implications

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

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

Officer to Contact

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The appended plan could not be published on the Council's website because of the complex images that it contains. A copy may be obtained from Elaine Wood, Principal Committee Administrator, email ewood@hastings.gov.uk or tel. 01424 451717