

Agenda Item No: 5

Report to: Hastings Foreshore Trust Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: 24 April 2012

Report Title: Community Showroom

Report By: Monica Adams-Acton
Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy

Purpose of Report

To advise the Foreshore Trust Charity Committee of revised proposals received from the Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust (HPWRT) for a community showroom, and to seek approval for the leasing of part of the promenade to the Hastings Pier Charity (HPC) or the HPWRT in respect of these.

Recommendation(s)

- 1) To agree in principle the granting of a 20-year lease at a peppercorn rent to the Hastings Pier Charity or the Hastings Pier and White Rock Baths for the installation and occupation of a moveable single storey structure on that part of promenade that lies between the western light well and the escape stair of the White Rock Baths, such agreement in principle being subject to:
 - a) Consultation with the Coastal Users Group**
 - b) Planning and Building Regulations consents**
 - c) The main terms and conditions set out in Section 15 of this report****
- 2) To delegate to the Estates Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Foreshore Trust the finalisation and completion of the lease.**
- 3) To permit the installation of a tank within the western light well as part of a discrete foul drainage system for such structure which is to serve initially as a community showroom for the lessee.**
- 4) To ask the Grants Advisory Panel to consider and make recommendations on a request for an investment of £25,000 by the Foreshore Charitable Trust in the costs of installing the facility.**

Reasons for Recommendations

Former plans to erect a community showroom on a deck over the western light well of the White Rock Baths have proved to be unfeasible. These plans have now been revised, and approval is now sought for the erection of a new structure on the promenade within the demise of the White Rock Baths.

Background

1. The HPC is an entity set up by the HPWRT to own, restore and maintain Hastings Pier. It has independent trustees. Its remit is to ensure that its assets are available for use now and for future generations and to ensure that the assets are operated in such a way as to deliver economic benefit to the town of Hastings.
2. In March 2011 the Foreshore Trust Charitable Committee gave in-principle approval for the granting of a fifteen-year lease to the HPC, subject to certain conditions. The lease was in respect of a pre-fabricated structure that was to be erected on a raised deck within the western light well of the White Rock Baths. Planning permission was subsequently granted for a period of five years.
3. The purpose of the structure was to serve as a community showroom for the HPWRT, housing its retail, community engagement, promotional and fundraising activities, and serving as an information portal for a range of local cultural, educational, heritage, leisure and business activities.
4. At the same time, the HPWRT sought a grant of £120,000 from the Charity Committee towards the costs, but a decision on this request was deferred.
5. The plans eventually proved to be unviable for a number of reasons, including the fact that the primary source of funding became unavailable. The projected costs were also considered likely to escalate due to the need for modifications to the deck to permit light into the inner parts of the building below the deck.
6. The HPWRT has investigated a number of alternative sites with a visual link to the Pier, including locations along the promenade. The area that is the subject of this proposal has been identified as the preferred site for the community showroom.

Revised Proposal

7. The revised proposal is for the erection of a free-standing single-storey structure on the promenade between the western light well and the escape stair of the White Rock Baths. The structure would occupy the full width between the parapet walls and extend beyond the line of the northern and southern parapets by approximately one metre on either side. A planning application has been submitted. There have been discussions with Council officers and it is not envisaged that the structure would obstruct the free passage of pedestrians and cyclists along the southern and northern aspects of the promenade.

8. Attached to this report is a site plan (Appendix A), and a prospectus that the HPWRT is using to raise awareness of and investment in the facility by the general community (Appendix B).
9. As was the case with the previous proposal, it is intended that the showroom will house its existing retail, community engagement, promotional and fundraising activities and will serve as an information portal for a range of local cultural, educational, heritage, leisure and business activities. It would intend to charge for the use of the building by others.
10. The costs of installing the showroom in this location are projected to be £150,000 and the HPC intends to apply for a community landfill grant from Veolia to cover the bulk of these. The deadline for submission of the grant application is 27th April and there are a number of qualifying criteria that the HPC must satisfy in order to be eligible for the grant. These include a cap of £100,000 on the amount of available funding and a 20% match funding requirement. Further, the grant-aided structure must be permanent and, in this respect, must be the subject of a 20-year minimum lease.
11. In order to raise sufficient funds to cover the costs of establishing the community showroom, and to satisfy the match funding requirement, the HPC is seeking a £25,000 investment from the Foreshore Charitable Trust. A Grants Advisory Panel was established in 2011 by the Charity Committee expressly for the purposes of considering and making recommendations about requests for grants in support of charitable activities. It is, therefore, suggested that the Grants Advisory Panel be asked to consider this request and make recommendations to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Charity Committee.
12. The HPC would like to be able to sub-let the facility for similar community uses if its requirement for the facility were to end during the lifetime of the lease.
13. HPC intends that the facility would be a permanent asset and that it would revert to the Foreshore Trust on completion of the lease, should such an arrangement be acceptable to the Charity Committee. Agreement on this aspect will need to be finalised prior to entering into any lease arrangements.
14. In line with the suggestion in the March 2011 report, the HPC is also seeking permission to install a tank in the western light well as part of a septic and waste water system to service the facility. The HPC also hopes to be able to hook into the White Rock Baths electrical and water supplies but, if this proves to be impractical, will secure suitable alternative arrangements.
15. Representatives of the HPWRT have discussed the revised plans with the Council's Estates Manager, and the following main heads of terms are proposed:

- a. Twenty-year full repairing lease, and a mutually agreeable break clause at 10 years
 - b. Lessee to be permitted to sublet the whole of the premises subject to prior agreement by landlord
 - c. Permissible uses to be only those that are in accordance with the objects of the Hastings Borough Council Act 1988 as shown in the schedule.
 - d. The granting of the lease to be in compliance with the relevant stipulations and procedures set out in the Charities Act 2011.
 - e. Completion of lease to be subject to a qualified surveyor's report as well as satisfactory compliance with any loading requirements specified by the Council's structural engineer; with the associated costs to be borne by the HPC.
16. The Coastal Users Group will be consulted on this revised proposal on 19th April and their recommendations will be reported verbally at the 24th April meeting of the Charity Committee.

Summary

17. In many respects, the revised proposal is essentially the same as the previous plans which were agreed in principle last March. The intended use of the facility remains the same, as does its intrinsic role in supporting the realisation of plans for the restoration of Hastings Pier. However, there are some fundamental differences. These include:
- a. Different location and structure – a smaller, permanent facility installed directly on the promenade, rather than a temporary structure installed on a raised deck.
 - b. A longer lease – 20 years instead of 15 years, and the ability to sublet the facility for similar community uses and to generate income from subletting.
 - c. Investment of £25,000 instead of a grant of £120,000.
 - d. It is intended that the facility be a permanent community asset.

Implications

18. The HPC intends to seek a £25,000 investment by the Foreshore Trust in the establishment of the facility. The Charity has a wide power to apply surplus income for any charitable purpose within the Borough of Hastings which would allow the Trust to provide financial assistance for the work of the HPC.

19. If the proposal is approved, it would lead to the creation of a new community facility, albeit primarily serving as a community showroom for the HPC for foreseeable future. There was community support for the earlier proposal and the Coastal Users Group will be consulted on this revised proposal.

Wards Affected

Castle

Area(s) Affected

Central Hastings

Policy Implications

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)

Risk Management

Environmental Issues

Economic/Financial Implications x

Human Rights Act

Organisational Consequences

Local People's Views x

Background Information

Appendix A Site plan

Appendix B HPWRT prospectus

White Rock Baths report to Charity Committee, March 2011

Officer to Contact

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The appendices to this report could not be published on the website. Copies may be obtained from Elaine Wood, Principal Committee Administrator, email ewood@hastings.gov.uk or tel. 01424 451717.

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