

**Agenda Item No:** 5

**Report to:** Charity Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013

**Report Title:** White Rock Baths proposal

**Report By:** Monica Adams-Acton  
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### **Purpose of Report**

To apprise the Charity Committee of a proposal from the Hastings Pier Charity for partial use of the White Rock Baths and to seek approval for delegated powers to pursue this.

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### **Recommendation(s)**

- 1. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Chair of the Charity Committee, and subject to satisfactory heads of terms for a lease being agreed, to:**
  - a. progress the proposal for a 5-year tenancy by the Hastings Pier Charity of a portion of the internal promenade level of the White Rock Baths; and**
  - b. the tendering and awarding of contracts to effect the necessary repairs, installation of services and other physical works to enable occupation of that part of the building, subject to tender costs being within previously approved budgets.**
- 2. That if the lease and repairs of the building go ahead, the marketing of the White Rock Baths is deferred.**
- 3. That the £25,000 grant to the Hastings Pier Charity towards the costs of a temporary structure be withdrawn.**

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### **Reasons for Recommendations**

A proposal has been received from the Hastings Pier Charity (HPC) relating to occupation of a portion of the White Rock Baths as a showroom to promote and provide information about the restoration of the Pier.

The HPC is obligated by funders to establish the showroom in conjunction with the initial works to repair the Pier structure, and an urgent decision on this proposal is required if the building is to be made habitable in sufficient time.

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## Background

1. In September 2012, the Charity Committee approved the appointment of agents to conduct a marketing campaign for the White Rock Baths site. The option to market the site was adopted following the Charity Committee's decision not to pursue the Lifecycle proposal in light of associated uncertainties and potentially substantial costs and risks to the Foreshore Trust.
2. In the latter part of 2012, Cluttons LLP was appointed to undertake the marketing exercise, although it was agreed there was little to be gained in commencing this during the winter season. Cluttons subsequently developed a marketing proposal which is ready to be activated, subject to final amendment. The cost of terminating the contract with Cluttons would be £5,000.
3. In November, the Hastings Pier Charity (HPC) received confirmation of an £11.4m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) on condition that the Charity is able to raise sufficient match funding from other sources. The HPC has achieved this in a remarkably short space of time, and it is projected that the works on the Pier will commence around June this year.
4. An important aspect of the HLF funding and the HPC's plans is the establishment of a seafront showroom primarily in order to provide information and engage with the community in the restoration of the Pier. Earlier proposals for the erection of a temporary structure by the HPC on the promenade within the White Rock Baths site were approved by the Charity Committee.
5. 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, in respect of a pre-fabricated structure that was to be erected by the HPC 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. These plans eventually proved unviable.
6. In April 2012 the Charity Committee considered a second, alternative, proposal from the HPC for the erection of a free-standing, pre-fabricated, single-storey structure on the promenade between the western light well and the escape stair of the White Rock Baths. The Charity Committee resolved at that time to grant the HPC a 20-year lease at a peppercorn rent, subject to a number of conditions and planning permission. The Committee further resolved to make a grant of £25,000 towards HPC's costs of installing this facility. HPC has obtained planning permission for this structure.

## New Proposal.

7. The HPC is now in a position to establish the showroom and has proposed an alternative option to proceeding with the erection of the pre-fabricated structure on the promenade. If this new proposal proves not to be feasible, the HPC intends to proceed with the temporary structure on the promenade. In order to comply with an HLF funding requirement, the HPC needs to have the showroom operational at about the same time as commencement of the repair works on the Pier.

8. The new proposal is to fit out part of the White Rock Baths building at the promenade level and to rent this for a period of five years on terms to be mutually agreed. The proposed uses remain the same as with previous proposals and would include the distribution of information, exhibitions, educational work and similar activities primarily associated with the history and restoration of the Pier, including potentially the retailing of memorabilia and Pier-related items.
9. Works would be required to render the building fit and safe for occupation. The HPC does not propose to undertake the works themselves, but wish to lease a finished space that they would then fit out for their purposes.

### **Required works**

10. HPC's space requirements are smaller than the promenade level area. Cost estimates have been obtained for the works required to render a suitable portion of the promenade level habitable. The works include: replacement of roof and flooring; insulation; installation of internal ceiling, walls and doors; new external doors and windows and security shutters on seafront side; mini kitchen, heating, lighting, ventilation and a single accessible toilet. Access to the rented space would be from the seafront side. Access to other internal parts of the building would be restricted through the erection of new partition walls and doors.
11. Two options have been identified and are appended to this report. The estimated costs exclude VAT, fees, the cost of getting water and electricity from existing service intakes, and main drainage connection:
  - a. The first option sets the installation of the toilet and store outside the area needed to meet the HPC's space requirements. This option would enable access to the toilet and store by other potential users. Estimated cost: £159,217
  - b. The second option sets the toilet and store within the area that would be leased to the HPC. Estimated cost: £150,704

### **Budget for White Rock Baths**

12. Within the Foreshore Trust's current business plan, £170,000 has been earmarked for White Rock Baths as a contribution to tenant fit-out. Other budgeted allocations for the White Rock Baths include £60,000 for reinstatement of drainage and £100,000 for promenade waterproofing and concrete repairs.

### **Summary and recommendations**

13. The HPC proposal would result in part of the building being brought back into use over a minimum five year period. The impact of this is likely to be highly positive, both in terms of breathing new life into a disused part of the seafront and in portraying a far more positive image of the building for longer term prospective uses. The majority of the physical works comprises repairs and improvements to the integrity, condition and appearance of the building, and will stand the structure in good stead over the long term.
14. There has long been an interest in revitalising this underused and dilapidated part of the seafront, and this is particularly pertinent at this time in view of the new

developments to the east and the imminent works to restore the neighbouring Pier. There is no question that these developments will attract greater use of the seafront by residents and visitors alike. The White Rock Baths occupies a prominent place between these two areas, but its derelict condition is a disincentive to public enjoyment of this part of the seafront. The works required to enable occupation of the building and HPC's proposed uses would greatly improve the area's appearance of and appeal, and is entirely consistent with the objectives of the Foreshore Trust to promote the public use and enjoyment of the Foreshore.

15. The proposal has considerable advantages over the previously approved plan to erect a temporary showroom on top of the promenade. The repairs and active use of the building are likely to present the White Rock Baths in a much more positive light to prospective future tenants, particularly alongside the restoration of the Pier. In contrast, the temporary structure would not contribute to the visual appeal of this part of the promenade and may well emphasise the dilapidated and derelict appearance of the White Rock Baths.
16. The space requirement and the siting of the space proposed for HPC occupation would enable other uses within the promenade level, and would not restrict access to lower levels. HPC's active occupation and the visitors that would be attracted to the showroom has the potential to stimulate other interest in the remainder of the promenade level over the short-medium term, although additional works would be required to render the rest of the promenade level fit and safe for occupation.
17. It is recommended that the advantages of revitalising and promoting public use and enjoyment of a Foreshore Trust asset, and the potential for stimulating further interest in the building, are considered in conjunction with the financial considerations in relation to the costs of rendering a portion of the building habitable.
18. It is also recommended that the marketing campaign be postponed at this stage, and the position be reviewed in a year's time. If, however, the proposal does not go forward and the HPC does not occupy the building, then the marketing campaign will be resumed.
19. The views of the Coastal Users Group will be sought at a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> April and reported verbally to the Charity Committee so that they may be considered before a decision is made. The previous proposals were considered by the Coastal Users Group and received general support, although there were some concerns expressed about the siting and visual appearance of the temporary structures.

## **Financial implications**

20. Based on costs totalling £160,000, and a life expectancy for the works of 30 years, the annual financing costs equate to some £12,000 p.a. (assuming an interest cost of 4%).
21. Proceeding with this proposal would negate the need for the previously approved £25,000 grant towards the installation of a temporary structure.
22. Termination of the contract with Cluttons for the marketing campaign would result in a cost of £5,000, from an original budget of £10,000.

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**Wards Affected**

Central

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**Area(s) Affected**

None

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**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

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**Background Information**

Appendices: Options 1 and 2 proposed floor plans

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**Officer to Contact**

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The appendices to this report are published on the Hastings and St Leonards Foreshore Charitable Trust web pages, or from the following link:

[http://www.hastings.gov.uk/community\\_living/foreshore\\_trust/](http://www.hastings.gov.uk/community_living/foreshore_trust/)