

CHARITY COMMITTEE
1 JULY 2013

Present: Councillors Forward, Hodges (in the Chair) and
Kramer. Also in attendance Mr Chris May, Protector.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. FORESHORE TRUST FINANCE REPORT

The Head of Finance presented a report on the current year's financial position, to agree revisions to the Trust's business plan and review the reserves policy. The final accounts would be considered by the committee at its meeting in September.

The report set out revisions to the Trust's business plan and budget, in line with the recommendations of a report on spend related to the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) initiatives. An estimated timescale for the projected spend, had also been included in the report.

A copy of the risk register for the Foreshore Trust (FST) was appended to the report. The risk register is reviewed annually and helps to inform the Trust's reserves policy. The report recommended that cash reserves of £695,000 be retained, plus sufficient funds to meet the repairs and renewals programme.

Members of the committee reiterated their commitment to minimise the operational costs of the Trust.

Councillor Kramer moved approval of the recommendations to the report, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – that:

- 1. To note the current financial position for 2013/14**
- 2. The business plan to be revised to accommodate additional works and contribution being made by the Foreshore Trust (as per the report elsewhere on the agenda).**
- 3. The risk Register be agreed (Appendix 4)**
- 4. The Reserves Policy (Appendix 5) be agreed.**

Reason for the decision: -

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The Council has the responsibility for the proper management of the financial affairs of the Trust. In doing so it complies with Accounting Codes of Practice and the high standards required for the accounting of Public money.

A surplus was generated in 2012/13 in line with expectations and a surplus in line with budget expectations is anticipated for 2013/14 in respect of ongoing operations.

A report elsewhere on the agenda, if approved, has implications for the Trust's reserves and the business plan

The reserves policy is reviewed on an annual basis and is undertaken against the uncertainties that continue in the economy.

4. STADE HALL AND OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure presented a report to seek the agreement of the Charity Committee to changes in the proposed management arrangements for the Stade Hall and Open Space. It had previously been proposed to create a charitable trust to run the facilities, however, concerns had been raised that this would not be financially viable or desirable operationally.

The report recommended the creation of a Management Advisory Committee, to oversee the use of the faculties, while the operation of the Stade Hall and Open Space would be managed by the Hastings Borough Council Amenities, Resorts and Leisure team, on behalf of the Foreshore Trust. The formation of Management Advisory Committee would allow for strong community involvement over the new facilities.

Provisions would be made for the Protector to be invited to attend the meetings of the Management Advisory Committee and receive the minutes of meetings. The Protector noted that Hastings Borough Council would be represented on the new committee, in its role as Local Authority. The Protector mentioned that the membership of the advisory committee could be extended to the wider community, not just focused on Hastings and St Leonards.

The committee was mindful of the comments of the Coastal Users Group, who had discussed the proposals at their meeting in June. Members stated that any vacancies on the Management Advisory Committee should be filled in line with the council's equalities policy.

Councillor Forward moved approval of the recommendations to the report, which was seconded by Councillor Kramer.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – that the Charity Committee approve the new arrangements and delegate any minor changes to the draft terms of reference to the Corporate Director, Environmental Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Charity Committee.

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Reason for the decision: -

The original proposal for management of the Stade Hall and Open Space called for the creation of a charitable trust who would lease the area from the Foreshore Trust and run the facilities. A founding group of trustees were selected following community consultation.

It has become apparent that a complete handover of the facilities creates an operational responsibility that is overly complex and financially problematic for a small group of trustees. An alternative arrangement has been proposed which will create an Management Advisory Committee to oversee the use of the facilities whilst leaving operational management with the HBC Leisure service on behalf of the Foreshore Trust.

5. FORESHORE TRUST – EVENTS GRANTS

The Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy submitted a report on the recommendations of the Grants Advisory Panel in respect of the Foreshore Trust's Events Grants Programme.

The Vice Chair of the Grants Advisory Panel presented the recommendations of the panel as to which organisations should be funded and answered questions from Members regarding the application process.

Members declined the proposed second recommendation of the Chair of the Grant Advisory Panel's report, and replaced it with a recommendation "that any unspent balance remaining at the end of the current Financial Year be retained in general reserves to maximise flexibility for future use".

Members thanked the Grant Advisory Panel for their efforts.

Councillor Kramer moved approval of the amended recommendations to the report, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – that the Charity Committee agree the recommendation of the Foreshore Trust Grants Advisory Panel regarding the approval of Events Grants to five applicants, each with conditions for final approval.

Reason for the decision: -

A number of applications for funding were received under the 1st Round of the Foreshore Trust's Events Grants Programme, which were evaluated by the Grants Advisory Panel.

6. POTENTIAL FUNDING OF PROJECTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FISHERIES LOCAL ACTION GROUP (FLAG)

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The Director of Regeneration submitted a report to propose the joint funding of four projects; the Big Beach project, Seafood Kitchen, Transforming Stade Open Space and Environmentally Sustainable Tourism, in partnership with the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).

The report highlighted that FLAG initiatives shared some aims with the Trust. The projects outlined in the report were in keeping with the Trust's equalities and community safety commitments, as they served to make the Foreshore more accessible. Moreover, the expenditure would deliver improvements to the Trust's assets.

The Committee amended the report; as suggested by the Protector, to include the phrase "all funds expended on this activity will be to meet the objectives of the Charitable Trust".

Members of the committee had regard to the Coastal Users Group's comments on these proposals.

Councillor Kramer moved approval of the recommendations to the report, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – that:

- 1. To agree the expenditure of £205k to achieve the proposals contained in this report.**
- 2. To authorise the development of the projects identified in the report, their submission for FLAG funding and subsequent implementation**

Reason for the decision: -

To draw down European and other investment into improving Trust assets and to assist in securing future investment of European funds for this purpose.

To promote the better use of the Trust's land by the public it is intended to benefit.

7. COASTAL USERS GROUP

The minutes of the meetings of the Coastal Users Group held on 17 June 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meetings of the Coastal Users Group held on 17 June 2013 be received and noted.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.46pm)