

Report to: Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: 12th December 2016

Report Title: Seafront Water Play Facilities

Report By: Monica Adams Acton, Assistant Director Regeneration and Culture

Purpose of Report

To update members on the progress to date in developing the proposal for a seafront water play facility and to gain support for the further progression of the project including the agreement of a design brief as a basis for potential procurement.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. To agree to the principle of a proposed installation of a Water Play Facility, including a kiosk and additional seating and picnic areas, subject to confirmation of operational and insurance issues.**
- 2. To approve a budget of up to £225,000 within the Business Plan for 2017/18**
- 3. To give delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture for the procurement of an agreed design brief through the East Sussex Procurement Hub**

Reasons for Recommendations

A seafront water play facility has been much requested by residents and visitors to the town for many years, particularly since the construction of the Pelham Play area in 2012 which it would complement.

The provision of such a facility would act as a destination attraction on the seafront at Hastings, close to the town centre and encouraging greater use of this part of the seafront for healthy activity for younger children and their families.

The development of this type of attraction and its associated facilities is also seen to support the continued regeneration of the seafront and wider town and is aligned with priorities for the Foreshore Trust and Hastings Borough Council.

Introduction

1. The provision of a 'Splashpad' or water play facility has been an aspiration for the town as well as for trustees to provide a free to use, destination attraction while furthering the aims of the common use, benefit and enjoyment of the charity's land.
2. The facility would also support the aim of the Hastings Play Strategy produced jointly by Hastings Borough Council, the Play Forum and local housing associations in trying to ensure that every child has access to good quality play spaces, recognising the value to the mental and physical health of children as well as new opportunities for people to engage with the seafront and beach,
3. A water play facility would provide a simple and accessible way for a wide age range of children to engage experience multi-sensory and imaginative play close to the sea, in a free facility not currently available elsewhere in the town.
4. Similar facilities provided at other nearby coastal towns (Bexhill, Worthing, Brighton) have had not only encouraged children and their families to take part in health, outdoor exercise but have also indirectly benefitted the local economy.
5. The proposed location is close to other free facilities such as the Play Park, sand play, volleyball and fitness equipment as well as commercial attractions and services that are existing tenants of the Foreshore Trust.
6. The proposed site is a current grass and flower bed, opposite the Italian Way and adjacent to the promenade and beach (see attached plan and render?). It is on land owned by the Foreshore Trust and currently designated under the Hastings Borough Council Act 1988 for parking although it does not form part of the current Pelham car park.
7. It's likely that the water play area would be operated seasonally for approximately six months perhaps between April and September. This is broadly in line with other similar water play facilities

Design and consultation

8. Initial advice on the potential location, design and operation has been sought from a national water product supplier and we have a better idea of some of the options available and budget costs associated with a water play area and associated facilities.
9. It is likely that we would specify a 'two-use' system where 'used' water from the water play area is collected in an underground tank that can then be used for watering seafront plants. Other options of full recycling are prohibitively expensive to install and maintain as well as requiring a series of large underground tanks and equipment. A single use system was considered but doesn't have the sustainable benefits of being able to reuse the water and reduce its use in other areas. However we do intend to tender for all three cost options as a further assurance on value and sustainability.

10. A design brief has been produced in consultation with the Council's play development and planning teams. We would expect a range of floor jets such as fountains, water tunnels and misters which have very low water usage and above ground 'umbrella' jets. This would provide opportunities for a wide variety of ages and abilities to enjoy the facility.
11. The proposed site is within a conservation area and pre-application planning advice has been sought. The planning department have confirmed that the proposal is acceptable in principle and is accordance with Policy FA6 of the Hastings Planning Strategy 2014. This seeks to support development that builds on the Seafront's distinctive heritage and attractiveness as a destination for leisure and recreational activity. Given the site's location in a prominent seafront location, and within a conservation area, materials and design will be key considerations.
12. In addition to the landscaping and water play equipment and surface, a small kiosk will also be required to act as a plant room to house the pumping equipment and controls. Further advice on the type of acceptable design and style will be sought from the planning department
13. The kiosk could be used as a base to hire deckchairs, sun loungers, windbreaks etc. that are currently managed from the Lifeguard Station. If of a sufficient size the kiosk could also incorporate a small retail space to perhaps sell drinks, snacks and ice creams.
14. The site is outside of the area currently designated for Leisure Activities under the Hastings Borough Council Act 1988 which would mean that the ancillary catering would have to be operated by the Trust
15. We are also proposing to provide an additional raised seating area to the northern boundary of the site. This provides a barrier to the sound and hazards of the adjacent road in addition to somewhere for parents and families to sit. We are hoping to retain and enhance the grassed area to the south east for sitting and picnics.
16. In design terms we will seek to integrate the water play facility as much as possible using sympathetic natural materials and planting where possible to maintain the existing seafront view and the kiosk will be designed on existing seafront themes, perhaps similar to the trading kiosks, lifeguard station and beach huts.

Financial Implications

17. We are proposing to develop a design and build tender package based on an agreed brief covering our requirements and an indicative budget.
18. A budget of £225,000 for construction has been identified that will cover the preparatory groundworks, supply of services, pumps & equipment, kiosk and picnic area as well as additional fencing and seating, break down as follows:

Civils work, surfacing, landscaping and seating	85,000
Water play equipment, pumps and system	65,000
Below ground grey water tank for recycling	15,000

Supply of services (electric, water and connection to sewer)	25,000
Kiosk	25,000
Contingency	10,000
Total budget	225,000

19. An annual service will be required by specialist contractor and this is likely to cost £2000. Costs for the water and electric are difficult to quantify because they are based on usage affected by weather and many other factors. However as a guide the castle Street fountain which operates all year round including evenings in the summer months uses approximately £2000 of water and £3000 electric each year.
20. It is hoped that a major part of the total running costs (c. £7000) can be covered by income generated through the operation or lease of the kiosk, additionally offset by reduced grounds maintenance costs from the loss of the planting and recycling the water.
21. There is also the possibility of a donation towards the capital costs of approximately £50,000 from a private source. This has yet to be confirmed but could reduce the Foreshore Trust's contribution or improve the facilities that are currently being considered

Next steps and timescales

22. It is important to understand the experience of other towns in the operating issues and associated costs and further research is planned with colleagues, particularly in Worthing who operate a similar facilities.
23. A draft design brief (attached) has been produced; this will need further work and consultation before tendering, together with layout plans, particularly if a substantial source of private funding is also confirmed.
24. Pre planning advice has been sought and support for the scheme has been confirmed in principle, subject to design guidance and also that it aligns with planning strategy objectives. A full planning application will be submitted once a contractor has been appointed and the final design agreed.
25. The Coastal Users Group have previously been supportive of the aspiration for a water play facility and were consulted on the proposal at their last meeting on 29th November where they agreed to support the scheme (TBC)
26. Hastings Borough Council will be undertaking a review of the Seasonal Lifeguard Service over the coming months that operate on Foreshore Trust land. We will consider the development of the service in terms of both the area covered and operating season. This would be an important factor in the location of the water play attraction, so close to the beach as it would mean that children and families using the facility would also have further supervision and would be able to use the sea safely.
27. Subject to agreement of the budget for the project in the Business Plan it is anticipated that the tender can be advertised by the East Sussex Procurement Hub

before Christmas with tenders back and evaluated by the end of January. Planning consent would be granted by the end of March with works on site starting during April/May, allowing the attraction hopefully open in late May early June.

Wards Affected

All

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	yes
Economic/Financial Implications	yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	yes
Local People's Views	yes
Anti-Poverty	No

Additional Information

Draft Brief (to follow)
Layout plan (to follow)
Artists impressions (attached)

Officer to Contact

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