

CULTURE, TOURISM & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 44

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: **Seafront Strategy – Scrutiny Workshop Update**

Date of Meeting: **1st March 2012**

Report of: **Strategic Director, Communities**

Contact Officer: Name: Ian Shurrock Tel: 29-2084
E-mail: @brighton-hove.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The seafront is of vital importance to the economy of the city as a focal point which attracts both residents and visitors in large numbers. The seafront is a showcase for the city and plays a major role in attracting business visitors to conferences and events. This report is an update on the successful workshop held with members of the CTEOSC in December on the emerging Seafront Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Members recognise the benefits of the seafront and the importance of the emerging Seafront Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 While there has been considerable investment in the seafront particularly between the piers in recent decades, a Seafront Strategy is required to ensure that the seafront can be maintained and improvements prioritised as the pressure on available resources increases.

- 3.2 The scale of the seafront is large both in terms of the full length from Hove Lagoon to Saltdean (13km) and the numbers of people the area attracts. For example, the vast majority of the 8 million visitors to the city visit the seafront. Also, the seafront is extremely well used by residents as a recreational resource.
- 3.3 At the workshop in December the key strategic issues were identified as:

Operational Management

The council provides a 365 day a year service on the seafront due to the scale and importance of the area. The core Seafront Team is supplemented by the lifeguards during the summer season.

Members highlighted the cleanliness of the seafront as a key issue and the work of the Cityclean staff who start cleaning the seafront at 6am was recognised.

Maintenance

The harsh corrosive environment combined with the heritage requirements of many seafront structures makes maintenance a considerable challenge. For example, the recently completed painting of the railings in Brighton cost approximately £350,000.

Members encouraged the use of other resources such as Community Payback to paint the railings. However, there are restrictions due to health and safety requirements on the areas where such teams can work.

The next phase of painting railings will take place from the Peace Statue to Courtney Gate on the Hove Seafront. In addition the “cucumber” benches will be repaired along the same area. Further on-going repairs will take place on various white shelters. The replacement of wooden kerbs on the lower promenade in Brighton will be completed by April.

Property Management

Members were supportive of the map of zones which indicated the different types of usage that predominate in sections all along the extent of the seafront. The rent for each property is considered individually, however, a balance is sought between achieving commercial returns and the development of particular usage areas eg artist arches.

Designating each zone with a predominant type of usage enables areas to be developed with properties let or use encouraged that is complementary rather than in conflict. For example the Outdoor Recreation and Sports along from Hove Lagoon, the Artists Quarter, Bars and Restaurants, and with Madeira Drive designated for Family Leisure Attractions/Facilities.

Madeira Drive

Madeira Drive was identified by Members as a priority for the Seafront Strategy. While Madeira Drive comes alive as a major event space with for example the Brighton Marathon and Veteran Car Run, there is a challenge for the area to benefit from activity throughout the year. The well established Yellowwave Beach Sports Facility has been very successful, the Adventure Golf much improved with investment from the tenant, and the addition of the Brighton Wheel on Daltons Bastion are all positives for Madeira Drive. However, it was felt that the area still has significant potential particularly as a link to the Marina.

Since the workshop interviews have taken place for two short listed proposed developments on the old Peter Pan's Playground site. The proposals are currently being evaluated with a possible decision being made at the Cabinet Member Meeting in March for a preferred development. An all year round attraction is being sought to recognise the desire to extend the economic impact of the area.

Consultation has also taken place with Cityparks in relation to planting that could offset the harsh concrete terrain of Madeira Drive. Cityparks are currently monitoring experimental planting that is currently taking place in other seaside resorts. Brighton & Hove does not have a sheltered seafront and therefore it is difficult for any substantial planting to be effective. In addition, any additional planting would be subject to resources being identified.

The lack of development on the Black Rock site was identified by members as a key issue that was holding back the potential of Madeira Drive. While the proposed development of the ice arena is on-going, it was felt that in the meantime a possible temporary retail and leisure destination could be beneficial. The possibilities include a family leisure attraction, container based retail and temporary sporting provision. However, clarity needs to be obtained on the potential timescale for the ice arena before temporary provision can be progressed. In addition, such a development would provide a destination for the Volk's Railway.

Other Developments

Members recognised the potential of other major developments along the seafront as well as Black Rock such as the proposed I360 and the opportunity for the redevelopment of the King Alfred Leisure Centre. However, the current economic climate was inhibiting such developments being achieved.

3.4 Next Steps

Consultation is on-going with both internal and external stakeholders with a view to completing the strategy for consideration at the appropriate committee within the new committee structure. The intention being to take the strategy to the appropriate committee early in the new cycle of meetings with a provisional date of June identified.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultation is on-going with both internal and external stakeholders.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The Seafront Strategy would need to consider available resources and the financial implications of any development proposals would be included in future reports, as appropriate.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington Date: 14/02/2012

Legal Implications:

5.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Specific site issues such as Black Rock will be the subject of further reports to the appropriate council meeting.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce, Principal Solicitor Date: 21/12/2012

Equalities Implications:

5.3 A vibrant seafront with a wide range of activities gives the opportunity for people from a wide cross section of the community to experience recreational opportunities.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Sustainability will be embedded in the strategy due to the importance of the seafront in relation to social, economic and environmental issues.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications but a well used, attractive seafront could discourage anti-social behaviour.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The intention of the strategy is to prioritise the opportunities presented by the seafront and the risk of each development would need to be managed accordingly.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The seafront makes a major contribution to the economy of the city.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Documents in Members' Rooms:

1. None

Background Documents:

1. None

