

Subject	Draft Seafront Strategy		
Date of Meeting	Thursday 15th November 2012		
Report of	Strategic Director - Place		
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Key Decision	No		
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. They are drawn to the Seafront to enjoy the wide range of sporting and leisure opportunities that are available. In addition, the Seafront is a major attraction for the city and plays a significant role in attracting business visitors to conferences and events.
- 1.2 Although the United Kingdom is experiencing economic difficulties, the Seafront is still attracting investment as demonstrated by the Brighton Bathing Pavilion proposal in Madeira Drive, the Brighton Wheel, and the progress being made on the I360 project. Regular enquiries into development possibilities on the Seafront mean that it is important that there is clarity on the availability and suitability of such opportunities through an emerging Seafront Strategy. In addition, a Strategy would greatly assist when applying for external funding and the allocation of developer contributions.
- 1.3 The scope of the Strategy has been considered from two perspectives. First, the identification of over-arching themes for the Seafront that relate to the whole length of the coast from Hove Lagoon to Saltdean and south of the A259. Secondly, an assessment of the individual character areas that comprise the Seafront to identify potential opportunities for improvement, while acknowledging the challenges each area presents.
- 1.4 Consultation for the draft Strategy has included successful workshops with Members through Scrutiny and an officer workshop. The latter included a wide representation of the council services which all impact upon the success of the Seafront. These workshops have identified Madeira Drive as a key area for improvement and this is reflected in the number of opportunities highlighted on the character area map for Madeira Drive in Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members approve the vision, themes and character areas of the emerging Seafront Strategy.
- (2) That Members approve a consultation process on the draft Seafront Strategy which will inform a final Strategy to be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The following “Background Information” replicates much of the “Introduction” to the draft Strategy as both sections need to set out the context to the approach for the emerging Seafront Strategy. In 1992 Brighton Borough Council and the South East English Tourist Board commissioned Conran Roche Planning and KPMG Peat Marwick to prepare a development strategy for the regeneration of Brighton Seafront.
- 3.2 The 20th anniversary of the “Seafront Development Initiative” provides an ideal opportunity to refresh the priorities for improvements on the Seafront. The Initiative considered the “urban” stretch of Seafront from the Hove boundary to the edge of the Brighton Marina. However, the focus ended up primarily on the King’s Road Arches situated between the Palace Pier and West Pier as the area which suffered the most problems yet offered the most potential.
- 3.3 There is no doubt that the development of the Seafront between the piers has been an outstanding success. Representatives of other British seaside resorts are envious of what has been achieved, but it is essential that continuous improvement takes place to ensure the value of the Seafront is not only maintained but enhanced for the city.
- 3.4 An updated Seafront Strategy for the city of Brighton & Hove gives the chance to consider the wider 13km of the Seafront from Hove Lagoon to Saltdean. Therefore, the intention is to build upon the Seafront Development Initiative by identifying the scope for future areas of priority.
- 3.5 It is interesting to note the parallels today with 20 years ago particularly with regards to the financial climate with the consultants concluding that:

“The recession over the last two years has made developers and investors increasingly cautious about expansion. The Borough Council, faced with having to make expenditure cuts across all its services has also to face an acute shortage of financial resources. An extremely difficult funding environment currently prevails therefore”.
(Brighton Seafront Development Initiative 1992)
- 3.6 Within this overall context of the financial climate, it is clear that realistic objectives are essential in order that positive progress can continue to be made. These priorities have been formulated by a review of the Seafront in

relation to over-arching themes and individual character areas, which have informed the vision and will contribute towards the development of an updated strategy for the Seafront.

3.8 In 1992 the vision for the Seafront was identified as:

“The Seafront – the meeting place of resident and visitor, recreation and business, Town and Sea”

3.9 The Seafront Development Initiative has been very successful in achieving this ‘meeting place’ between the piers and therefore consideration of the whole extent of the Seafront from Hove Lagoon to Saltdean, gives the potential for an extended vision as follows:

“To develop the unique character areas of the iconic Brighton & Hove Seafront to create attractive, sustainable, high quality environments for residents, businesses and visitors throughout the year”

3.10 As the Seafront is an integral part of the city, the emerging Seafront Strategy needs to be linked with other policy documents and initiatives that have a city-wide impact including:

- Corporate Plan
- City Plan
- One Planet Living
- Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Sport & Physical Activity Strategy
- Transport – Local Transport Plan
- Brighton Station Gateway Project
- City Investment Prospectus

3.11 The over- arching themes focus on the important combination of people and place that are the essence of any area. The themes that have been identified are as follows:

- Active Seafront – people being active whether physically or enjoying culture.
- Seafront Management – the day to day operational of the Seafront.
- Seafront Economy – property management of the council’s property portfolio.
- Tourism Development – improving the Seafront’s tourism offer.

- Seafront Architecture and Coastal Protection – maintenance of infrastructure.
- Seafront Regeneration Projects – potential large scale development areas.
- Connectivity – access along and to the Seafront.

3.12 The length of the Seafront from Hove Lagoon to Saltdean has been divided into a range of Character Areas in accordance with their prime use. The opportunities and challenges have then been incorporated in order to identify the potential for improvements. The areas identified are as follows:

- Hove Lagoon to King Alfred – Sport
- King Alfred to Peace Statue – Informal recreation / outdoor events
- Peace Statue to Ellipse – Leisure attraction and sports facilities
- Ellipse to Palace Pier- Commercial leisure
- Palace Pier to Brighton Marina – Family leisure attractions and facilities
- Roedean to Saltdean – Recreation

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 The Seafront Themes and structure of the Character Areas has been informed by a Scrutiny Workshop and an Internal Officers Workshop.

4.2 A consultation exercise will be undertaken on the draft strategy over the winter period to inform a finalised Strategy for approval by the Policy & Resources Committee in the spring. The consultation exercise will include:

- Further internal officer consultation
- Consultation with the wide number of Ward Members whose wards include the Seafront.
- Public consultation
- Consultation with external stakeholders such as seafront businesses including the operators of the main attractions along the Seafront, and voluntary organisations based on the Seafront e.g. sports clubs.
- External agencies whose operation directly impacts on the Seafront e.g. Southern Water.
- Linking with consultation on other initiatives e.g. refresh of Economic Development Strategy to minimise duplication.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report as the officer time required will be met from existing resources. The financial implications of any future proposals would be addressed in the relevant Committee report in due course.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington Date: 11th October 2012

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 The Strategy will be an important policy document to be referred to on an ongoing basis when considering any matters relating to the Seafront. Much of the Strategy reflects current practice but it will be extremely useful to have all relevant considerations set out in one cohesive document.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce

Date: 11th October 2012

5.3 Equalities Implications

- 5.3.1 A vibrant Seafront with accessible activities gives the opportunity for people from a wide cross section of the community to experience recreational and leisure opportunities. A range of services is necessary along the Seafront to meet the needs of all ages from paddling pools to seating and toilet facilities.

5.4 Sustainability Implications

- 5.4.1 Sustainability is embedded in the emerging Seafront Strategy due to the importance of the Seafront in relation to social, economic and environmental issues. A key focus of the Strategy is to increase the sustainability of the tourism economy by widening the season to an all year round offer. In relation to the importance of the Seafront for environmental issues examples include, the conservation of the Site of Special Scientific Interest on the Seafront, new initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint e.g. solar trees, and water saving measures during the drought.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications

- 5.5.1 An environment of well used quality areas can make a positive contribution to reducing anti-social behaviour. This includes the provision of good lighting which is particularly important for the management of the night time economy.

5.6 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 5.6.1 A basis for the draft Strategy is to prioritise the opportunities for development presented by the Seafront with the risk for each development needing to be managed accordingly.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications

- 5.7.1 The Seafront is of major importance to the economy and well-being of the city. The Seafront plays a hugely significant role in the tourism offer of the city which contributes an estimated £732 million per year to the city's economy and sustains 17,500 jobs (13,000 FTEs).

6. **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)**

- 6.1 The Seafront Strategy is currently a draft and therefore a consultation exercise will be undertaken to inform a final Strategy.

7. **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Endorsement is being sought from Members on the draft Seafront Strategy to enable a wider consultation exercise to be undertaken which will inform a final Strategy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Seafront Strategy

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. Report to Culture, Tourism & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st March 2012.